Chronicles

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CHRISTENDOM UNDER SIEGE

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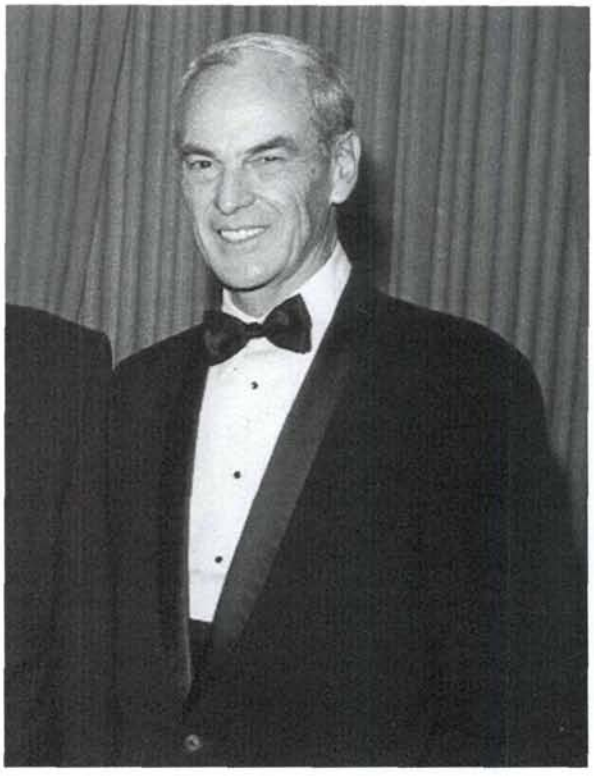
Happy 30th Birthday, *Chronicles*!

My warmest congratulations to Tom Fleming and his associates at *Chronicles* for their influential role in the national consideration of ideas and principles and policies in this confused and troubled era. Happy 30th Birthday!

In 1975, when some of the dust from the cultural convulsions of the 60's had settled, I said to the Rockford College Trustees that the American ethos had been changed profoundly, so that new priorities in the society were becoming increasingly dominant, which would make it very difficult for our college to fulfill the aims that we had formally entered into our statement of purpose. Our hope was to graduate broadly knowledgeable students who clearly appreciated their responsibilities as civilized individuals, citizens, marriage partners, parents, employees, and neighbors. To try to think through how we should carry forward our educational program in this environment would be a task far too complex for faculty committees. I suggested we establish a new division at the college, which would enlist some of the brightest minds alive to work full time in addressing this critical mission. After a year of deliberations, The Rockford College Institute was formed, and we then realized the task could not be fulfilled by restricting the work to the field of education. We had to try to understand also what had happened in the primary social institutions, government, law, the media, the family, literature, entertainment.



John A. Howard, founder of The Rockford Institute.

Leopold Tyrmand, founding editor of Chronicles.

While we were working out the plans for the Institute, I happened upon an absolutely electrifying article in Phi Beta Kappa's *American Scholar* magazine about the tyranny of the American press. It was entitled, "The Media Shangri-La." The author was Leopold Tyrmand. I buzzed my secretary and said, "Ruth, please telephone the magazine and find out how I can get in touch with this fellow. Even if he is in Lower or Upper Slobovia, I have to talk to him." It turned out he was living in Connecticut and had been a writer for the *New Yorker*. We had a two-and-a-half hour lunch in New York.

He said that what we hoped to do was something he would very much like to be a part of, but, if we wanted to affect the national culture, the one activity best suited for that goal would be a new, lively, and fearlessly outspoken journal of opinion. If we would agree to that requirement, he was our man. Leopold was a Polish novelist whose works were powerfully critical of the Soviet regime and could only be published in *samizdat*, the underground press. His books generated a large national audience. He was, in effect, Poland's Solzhenitsyn.

For a long period, he had been a member of a secret organization of Polish intelligentsia working on a plan for a cultural counterrevolution. Other members included Lech Walesa and the archbishop of Krakow. As a major novelist, he was invited to do a lecture tour of American campuses, but there was no way the Polish government would provide a travel visa for this political heretic. Many powerful Polish citizens joined in a national effort to procure a Tyrmand visa. Eventually, they prevailed. One of the key figures in that campaign was the archbishop of Krakow, who, as you know, became Pope John Paul II. Leopold became the founding editor of *Chronicles*.

Before long, the Institute was separated from Rockford College. And the rest is history.

—remarks by John A. Howard at the dinner celebrating Chronicles' *30th Birthday, October 14, 2006*

Legal-affairs editor Stephen B. Presser, editor Thomas Fleming, and Rockford Institute board chairman David A. Hartman at Chronicles' *30th Birthday Dinner.*

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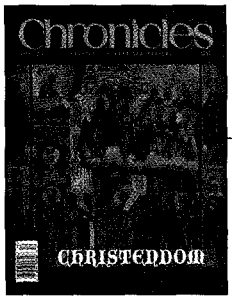
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE



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On Blaming Bryan

In "Don't Blame Bryan!" (*Reactionary Radicals/Radical Reactionaries*, October), Jeff Taylor takes Michael Kazin to task for identifying William Jennings Bryan as the man who built the ideological bridge between 19th-century *laissez-faire* government and the modern liberal welfare state birthed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Dr. Taylor writes: "[Kazin] offers no detailed evidence to support this claim beyond a laundry list of Bryan-endorsed reforms." This is like saying that there is no evidence against a murderer beyond the testimony of 20 or so eyewitnesses to the crime!

I will concede that it is unfortunate to lump such a man as Bryan, who had both values and ability, with the valueless hustlers and snake-oil salesmen, typified by FDR, of the modern welfare state. Nonetheless, it was the Progressives, whose greatest representative was Bryan, who began the transformation of our government and society from limited and free to socialist-totalitarian and no longer free. To be sure, the Progressives wished to use the government to do good, yet this is the foil of every demagogue and demagogic movement that has made its appearance among us but failed to recognize the timeless truth that government can act in society, constructively and legitimately, only in a negative sense. Government is, at bottom, brute force, and one cannot use brute force to reform a man or a society while keeping that man or society free. Force can be used constructively for the purpose of reform only with children. And that, by the way, is why the nanny state treats its citizens as a mother would a nine-year-old child. Is this really the society we want? One in which the nameless and faceless army of government bureaucrats rule us as a child is ruled by doting but severe parents? It was the Progressives led by Bryan who bent the tree of government in this direction, and they deserve the blame for the disasters that have inevitably followed.

Dr. Taylor is also unjust in his demonization, by implication, of the Morgans. No two men in 19th-century America did more than Junius and Pierpont Morgan (*père* and *fils*) to establish sound money and promote foreign (primarily British) investment in this country. These two factors were of immense importance in fostering the prosperity and economic growth that characterized America in that golden century. The instabilities of the 19th century were caused by the system of partial-reserve banking that we have with us to this day. That bucking bronco of a financial system was managed far better by ethical private men such as the Morgans than it has since been handled by government bureaucrats through the Federal Reserve System. If we wish real reform, we must go to the root of the problem, which is the artificial interference of government in society. Shielding those men, including Bryan, who prepared the soil for the modern socialist-totalitarian germ from the criticism they deserve is counterproductive.

—*John Collins*
Weston, FL

Dr. Taylor Replies:

I agree with much of Dr. Collins' perspective, but I disagree with his assessment of blame and praise. Who are the eyewitnesses who testified about Bryan's supposed crime? They are cited in neither this letter nor Kazin's book. On the contrary, Bryan's contemporaries understood that he was a Jeffersonian. He was an exponent of individualism and an enemy of state socialism. Bryan was not the "greatest representative" of the Progressives who opened the door to the bureaucratic welfare state. In the Republican Party, it was Theodore Roosevelt; in the Democratic Party, it was Woodrow Wilson. (See Gabriel Kolko's classic *The Triumph of Conservatism.*) Bryan should not be blamed for the centralizing tendencies of other men—men who represented Eastern-urban-faux liberalism while Bryan was a champion of Western/Southern-rural-genuine liberalism. As for the Morgans, I cannot agree with Mr. Collins' assessment of their virtue. Greed and monopoly are not praiseworthy. The banking firm's links to Europe eventually contributed to Wilson dragging our country into a costly and unnecessary war.

By the way, while I disagree with a few aspects of Kazin's book *A Godly Hero*, it is, overall, a fine biography.

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by Roger D. McGrath

The Letter That Rocked Orange County

Greetings:

You are being sent this letter because you were recently registered to vote. If you are a citizen of the United States, we ask that you participate in the democratic process of voting.

You are advised that if your residence in this country is illegal or you are an immigrant, voting in a federal election is a crime that could result in jail time and you will be deported for voting without having a right to do so.

At the same time, you are advised that the government of the United States is installing a new computer system to verify the names of all newly registered voters who vote in the October and November elections. Anti-immigration organizations can ask for information from this new computer system.

Unlike Mexico, here, there is no incentive to vote. There is not a voter registration card in the United States. Therefore, it is useless and dangerous to vote in any election if you are not a citizen of the United States.

Do not listen to any politician who tells you the opposite. They are only looking out for their own interest. They only want to win elections without any regard to what happens to you.

Sincerely,
Sergio Ramirez

This letter was sent to some 14,000 foreign-born registered Democrats with Spanish surnames in the 47th Congressional District in Orange County, an area that includes part of Fullerton and much of Anaheim, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger wasted no time in declaring that the letter was "a despicable act of political intimidation and a hate crime." His Democratic challenger, Phil Angelides, claimed it was "the latest in a disgraceful pattern of efforts to intimidate Latino voters" by Republicans. Orange County GOP Chairman Scott Baugh called the letter "reprehensible and stupid." The incumbent representative from the 47th, Loretta Sanchez, said, "To have an opponent who is an immigrant who is suppressing the immigrant vote is disgusting and sad." Sanchez was referring to Tan Nguyen, a one-time Vietnamese boat person, who lives in an area of Garden Grove known as "Little Saigon." He is her Republican challenger, and, after much finger pointing at anti-illegal-immigration groups, his campaign was ultimately fingered for sending the letter.

The hyperbolic rhetoric in response to the mailing comes as no surprise, although Governor Schwarzenegger calling it a "hate crime" was beyond even my expectations. That Democrats would use the letter as an opportunity for rhetorical ballistics should surprise no one, but for Schwarzenegger and other Republicans to use even more inflammatory language needs an explanation.

Outside California, people may not understand that Republicans in the Golden State live in abject fear of the Latino vote. Whether legal or not, Latinos are voting in record numbers. The Latino Caucus already dominates the state legislature, and the Latino population is exploding. During the last four years, Los Angeles County has added a million people, nearly all illegal immigrants from south of the border. On the campaign trail, Schwarzenegger has been certain to miss no photo opportunities in Latino neighborhoods, where he has emphasized "education for the children." This is certainly an issue that resonates with illegal immigrants who have large families consisting of both foreign-born and American-born children. All the children seem to qualify for the free (to them) school breakfast and lunch programs, and Hispanics constitute the majority of students in most school districts in Southern and Central California. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the state's largest, they account for 80 percent of the students.

Although Republicans have denounced and abandoned him, Tan Nguyen has hung tough. "What is wrong with the letter?" I heard him ask on a local radio talk show. While not admitting that he was responsible for the letter, he defends its contents and claims that voting by illegal aliens is a problem in the 47th District. The claim is not unfounded. Back in 1996, then-Democratic challenger Loretta Sanchez upset multiterm incumbent Robert K. Dornan by a mere 984 votes in what was then the 46th District. Dornan claimed that Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, an organization of Mexican nationalists, had won the election for Sanchez by registering noncitizens to vote. A special U.S. House of Representatives probe found 750 illegal voters and "substantial fraud" but decided against further investigation, saying that it was unlikely that it could prove there were enough illegal votes to reverse the election. The probe also established that Hermandad Mexicana Nacional had registered noncitizens to vote, but no indictments against the organization followed. Further investigation and a recount probably would have given the election to Dornan, but the Republicans decided against it and against indictments of Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, fearing a Latino backlash and foolishly hoping Hispanics would vote Republican in the near future.

Now, a decade of massive illegal immigration later, the number of noncitizens voting in the 47th District is likely in the thousands. Illegal votes will decide any close election. Tan Nguyen knows this, and so, too, does everyone else. But sending the letter to 14,000 Latino households was a "hate crime." Special agents from the California Department of Justice raided Nguyen's campaign office and his home, and confiscated everything but the furniture. If only they took such action against illegal aliens. Just what crime Nguyen has supposedly committed is anybody's guess. Intimidation of voters, perhaps, for using the word *immigrant* without a qualifying *illegal* preceding it. If so, that would be the irony of the century, because many major newspapers in California—and especially the *Los Angeles Times*—refuse to modify immigrant with illegal. Moreover, the actual letter that was mailed was

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written in Spanish and used the word *emigrado*, meaning a legal but noncitizen resident, and not *inmigrante*, (an immigrant whose legal status is not specified). If that's a distinction without a difference, as some contend, then why did *La Opinion*, Los Angeles' leading Spanish-language newspaper, print a Spanish-language version of the letter and use the word *inmigrante* rather than *emigrado* as in the original?

If we could ask the alleged author of the letter, Sergio Ramirez, what he meant by his use of *emigrado*, we might have an answer. However, Sergio seems to be the man who never existed. A second raid by special agents of the California Department of Justice suggests that the author of the letter may be Mark Nhan Nguyen, a close friend of Tan's and, despite the surname, not a relative of the Republican challenger. Late in October, the agents swept down on the Anaheim house Mark Nguyen shares with a woman who works in Tan's campaign office. It seems that Mark Nguyen contracted with and paid for a Huntington Beach postal business to reproduce the letter and mail it.

The hysterical reaction to the letter may very well mean that the battle for the integrity of the election process in California was lost in 1996. Elections are corrupt in Mexico; why shouldn't they be corrupt in California as well? Moreover, the demographic sea change in California means that the state will come to resemble Mexico or another Latin American country by the middle of this century. Voter fraud, *mordida*, narco drug lords, overcrowded neighborhoods, trafficking in human beings, pimping, and an exploited laboring class have already caused parts of the 47th District to look more like Mexico than the California of the 1950's that was the envy of America. For this California kid who remembers the 50's fondly, and has traveled extensively in Mexico, it is nothing less than a disaster. ◁

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

NORTH KOREA has now barged into the global nuclear-weapons club by conducting a nuclear test. The six-party talks designed to get Pyongyang to relinquish its ambitions for a nuclear arsenal have effectively failed. Even if North Korea can be induced to return to those talks (which Pyongyang has boycotted for a year), the prospect that they will achieve meaningful results is small.

In the days and weeks to come, there will be much discussion about how the United States should respond, given the apparent failure of diplomacy. That is certainly an important issue, but an equally important consideration is how Washington should *not* respond.

The military option is especially rash, and, fortunately, the Bush administration does not seem inclined to go down that path. Some hawks, including Sen. John McCain, have previously suggested that the United States consider launching air strikes against North Korea's nuclear installations and missile sites—an incredibly high-risk strategy. Pyongyang might well conclude that a limited attack designed to degrade its nuclear program is merely a prelude to a full-blown U.S. assault to oust Kim Jong Il's regime, to which North Korea could respond with attacks on targets in South Korea and Japan, triggering a general war in East Asia.

And it would be a nasty one. North Korea has an army of more than one million troops poised to invade South Korea. She also has enough artillery pieces to fire some 300,000 shells per hour into the Seoul metropolitan area, home of nearly 50 percent of South Korea's population. And North Korea has rockets capable of reaching targets (including U.S. bases) in both South Korea and Japan. Although North Korea would ultimately be defeated, that would be small consolation to the families of the South Koreans, Japanese, and Americans who would perish in the conflict.

The current strategy of imposing U.N.-mandated economic sanctions enforced by a *de facto* air and naval blockade on North Korea is almost as dangerous as launching air strikes. The sanctions themselves are likely to be ineffectual. Constraining the imports of luxury goods (such as Kim Jong Il's expensive cognac) and restricting the travel of the "Dear Leader" and his cohorts will prove more annoying than lethal. Banning the import of heavy military hardware and restricting financial transactions will hurt a little more, but such measures are unlikely to cause Kim's regime to abandon the high-priority policy of continuing the quest for nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang is not likely to do something rash in response to such pinpricks, but the blockade provision is another matter entirely. Security Council members will not use that term, of course, because a *blockade* is an act of war under long-standing principles of international law. Moreover, North Korea has stated on numerous occasions (even before the current crisis) that she would indeed consider a blockade an act of war.

Although many of the statements coming out of Pyongyang over the years consist of froth and blather, this warning may be different. Stopping and boarding North Korean ships might be an intolerable humiliation to Kim's prickly and paranoid regime. No rational person wants North Korea to have nuclear weapons, but it is even worse to risk war by engaging in a clumsy attempt to prevent Pyongyang from developing nukes. Enforcing a blockade threatens to do just that.

America's default policy option should be to rely on deterrence. The United States has deterred other unsavory and volatile regimes in the past, notably Stalinist Russia and Maoist China. Indeed, China acquired her nuclear capability on the eve of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960's. That spasm of fanaticism made China as weird a place as North Korea is today. With thousands of nuclear weapons in our arsenal, we should be able to deter North Korea from attacking the United States and from even contemplating the transfer of nuclear material (much less a nuclear weapon) to Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups. To eliminate any doubt on that score, Washington should convey the message directly to the North Koreans that such behavior would be a regime-ending event.

Deterring Pyongyang from using its new nuclear status to bully its neighbors, though, is more problematic, since North Korean leaders might well wonder if the United States would really risk war (including attacks on American targets in East Asia) merely to protect third parties. Indeed, preventing bullying behav-

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ior in the region should not be America's responsibility at all. It should be up to North Korea's prosperous and capable neighbors, Japan and South Korea, to defend themselves.

Such defense might require building their own nuclear deterrents. Kim Jong Il's regime is counting on the United States to prevent Japan and South Korea from even considering the option of going nuclear. Pyongyang would then have the luxury of a nuclear monopoly in Northeast Asia (except for its ally, Beijing).

Instead of putting a leash on Japan and South Korea, U.S. officials should inform Pyongyang–and Beijing—that, if the North insists on crashing the global nuclear-weapons club, Washington will urge Tokyo and Seoul to make their own decisions about whether to acquire strategic deterrents. Even the possibility that South Korea and Japan might do so would come as an unpleasant surprise to both North Korea and China.

A decision on nuclear weapons would be a difficult and politically sensitive issue in both Japan and South Korea, and the United States should not exert pressure one way or the other. It is sufficient for Washington to inform those governments that the United States would not object to their developing nuclear weapons. In addition, the United States needs to let Seoul and Tokyo know that we intend to withdraw our military forces from South Korea and Japan. In an environment with a nuclear-armed North Korea, those forward-deployed forces are not military assets; they are nuclear hostages.

Faced with a dangerous, nuclear-armed neighbor and a more limited U.S.-military commitment to the region, Japan or South Korea (or both countries) might well decide to build a nuclear deterrent. Although the Japanese public seems reluctant to go down that path, the attitude in South Korea is different. A public-opinion poll taken shortly after Pyongyang's nuclear test showed that a majority of respondents believed that South Korea should develop her own deterrent.

The prospect of additional nuclear-weapons proliferation in Northeast Asia is obviously not an ideal outcome. But offsetting the North's looming illicit advantage is better than having Asia's democracies huddle under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Moreover, the real danger arises from proliferation when repulsive rogue states such as North Korea get such weapons, not when stable, democratic countries such as Japan and South Korea do so in self-defense.

The one chance of getting North Korea to abandon her current provocative course is if it becomes clear to Pyongyang that it may have to deal with nuclear neighbors and would, therefore, not be able to intimidate them. Indeed, Pyongyang might face the prospect of confronting more prosperous adversaries who could easily build larger and more sophisticated nuclear arsenals than North Korea could hope to do.

A better option than deterrence and defensive proliferation, though, would be to prod and entice China to rid the international community of Kim Jong Il's regime. That is not to suggest that the PRC invade and occupy the country. The strategy needs to be a more subtle one of subversion. China is ideally positioned to make the attempt since she provides the bulk of North Korea's food and energy.

Thus far, however, Beijing has been reluctant to put any serious economic pressure on Pyongyang. China worries that, if she undermines Kim, the North Korean state will unravel, much as communist East Germany did after losing Soviet support during the final stages of the Cold War. Such a development could have a number of unpleasant consequences for China, including a major influx of refugees.

An especially unpleasant prospect for Beijing is that China would then face a united Korea allied to the United States. That would mean the end of the North Korean buffer between the U.S. sphere of influence in Northeast Asia and the Chinese homeland. Even worse, it could mean a U.S.-military presence on the Chinese border.

We cannot do much to neutralize the problem of refugee flows, but the United States can allay China's other concern. Washington should assure Beijing that, if China subverts Kim's government and the North Korean state implodes, the United States will not exploit the situation. Instead, we would withdraw our forces from the Korean Peninsula and end the alliance with South Korea. That alliance is a wasting asset anyway, since Seoul increasingly aligns its foreign-policy positions with those of Beijing rather than of Washington. An amicable divorce is long overdue, and we would at least gain something for taking that step.

Such an offer might prove irresistibly tempting to Chinese leaders, since it would mean that China would be the most influential power on the Korean Peninsula in the foreseeable future. Moreover, PRC officials already must be pondering whether it is worth preserving North Korea, given Pyongyang's recent conduct. Kim had previously ignored Beijing's warnings not to conduct new missile tests. His regime has now ignored even stronger Chinese warnings not to conduct a nuclear test. China may well be ready to eliminate her troublesome client–if the United States makes it worth Beijing's while. We should at least explore the option, since it would be a relatively painless way of ending the North Korean nuclear threat.

—Ted Galen Carpenter

IN IRAQ, as of this writing, the death toll for U.S. soldiers has reached 100—in the month of October alone. So far, 2,813 members of the U.S. Armed Forces have died in Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. At least another 21,266 have been wounded, as reported by the Pentagon. This is a staggering toll, considering that we really do not know why these sacrifices are being made. When queried on this, members of the current administration continually shift their ground. At first, it was because the evil Saddam Hussein was going to nuke us or gas us in our pajamas through the use of advanced drone aircraft. When this was shown to be a lie, other excuses were trotted out and floated in the public media. We were going to turn Iraq into a wonderful democratic paradise. Or perhaps, we were going to fight terrorists over there instead of here, even though we have a criminally inadequate level of border security in our own country. Despite the demonstrable risk of terrorists coming across our poorly defended borders, as highlighted by the destruction of the World Trade Center and a portion of the Pentagon by Islamic immigrants, border security here is a joke. In Iraq, our troops did manage to capture Saddam Hussein, but instead of killing him on the spot (victory), he is getting the benefit of a show trial for propaganda purposes. Even so, a sort of victory has been achieved.

Why, then, are our military forces still occupying a foreign land and getting shot up at a rapid rate? True, our neoconservative leaders tell us to quit complaining about casualties as they are far less than those suffered during World War

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II. That, however, was a legitimate war. It was declared after our country was attacked. Now, not only are our own casualties mounting, but Iraq is blowing herself to pieces in a violent civil war. It seems that only a tyrant such as Hussein could hold together all these tribes, clans, sects, and nationalities in one set of borders when hatred and lust for revenge run deep among so much of the populace.

This negative news is all ignored, and our rulers now tell us that "we" must "stay the course and not cut and run." This is said from the safety of a fortified executive mansion. We are told that, if American forces leave Iraq, it will cause chaos. Chaos, however, is already the case. Or, if we do not continue to suffer the continued killing and maiming of our troops, this will dishonor the previous casualties. To this, I reply, using my old set of standards: How might we best prevent future casualties? How can we get the most of our men and women home, safe and sound? Is this cutting and running? Or is it prudence? It would appear that what is now being done by the President and his minions is damage control, so that, when total defeat comes, it will be during the next, probably Democratic, administration. In other words, the deaths and maiming will continue to occur to save the face of the people who sent them into harm's way. These same rulers rarely hazard themselves by venturing out of safe areas, and they never risk the lives and limbs of their own children. Thus, the notion that "we" should stay the course means that expendable cannon fodder must continue to fight and die, but not the members of the American ruling class.

Some years ago, I horrified one of my academic colleagues and a number of his students at a post-exam get-together at a local pub. One of the graduate students opined that "we" ought to go over there and kick Saddam Hussein's ass. What was this "we" stuff? Did he have a mouse in his pocket? Why did he not go over there himself on this evidently important mission? In fact, I gave him my standard offer for persons of his ilk: an M1 Garand rifle, a bayonet, and two cartridge belts full of top-quality hand-loaded ammunition. Not surprisingly, he declined my generous offer. I then forcefully suggested that he was sorely lacking in manhood. "We" evidently did not include himself. "We" obviously meant expendable folks, like I was back in the late 1960's. I explained that victory, as figured by the people in the infantry, consisted in cornering your enemy's Maximum Leader, killing him (or her), and then proudly exhibiting the severed head held by the hair to admiring onlookers, while saying, "We got the bastard." Anything less was defeat and not worth pursuing. The result was shocked silence from the assembled multitude. I was not surprised at this, as I was the only combat vet in the bunch.

Now, it is true that I may have lacked a proper "big picture" view of the Vietnam War from my groundpounder vantage point. I was merely trying to stay alive and keep as many of my comrades alive—and whole—as possible. I generally did not know which brigade I was in, nor the province, nor the corps. That was important to the lifers, not to me. Still, my definition of victory remains the only really valid one. From my lowly position, I could see that victory in that "police action" was never really defined, and so I was not surprised that "we" lost. The United States apparently never intended to win that undeclared war.

One major problem with the presidential usurpation of the War Power, ever since that little tin-horn socialist Harry Truman first got us into a major shooting match without a declaration of war, is that we no longer debate what constitutes victory, nor set forth what it is that we seek to accomplish—and why. Even a tyrant such as Franklin D. Roosevelt felt obliged to get a declaration of war. The result is that we sally forth to slay foreign dragons but no longer have a definite stated goal, nor a delineated plan of action that is publicly debated by the peoples' representatives and passed by them. The result is a breathtaking expansion of executive prerogative to the level of that of kings and emperors. Consequently, our Founders, not excepting Alexander Hamilton, are likely spinning in their graves. Because of the lack of constitutional legitimacy, candor, and debate, public support of modern military actions quickly erodes.

Now, if the neocons are correct that we are no longer a republic but an empire, and that those of us who are reactionaries and oppose this "progress" should put up and shut up, I submit a modest proposal. Let the emperor lead the charge. Alexander the Great was the sort of Great Leader that our President wishes to emulate, and he led the charge, at great personal risk, into the thick of battle. I propose that President Bush and Vice President Cheney personally lead our troops into battle with Al Qaeda and the Iraqi dissidents. After all, neoconservative icon Winston Churchill was also in personal combat in a similar situation. The late Gen. Smedley Butler was in favor of putting those who benefit from war into combat on the front lines. Those who stayed behind would be paid only the wages of a common soldier in order to eliminate war profiteering. With our rulers fighting fiercely, leading, and not merely managing our troops, "we" really would be staying the course and not cutting and running. Or, if the risk of losing our leaders is too great, "we" should just hand off the risks of combat to that mouse in the pocket and save thousands of American lives in the process.

—*Steve Berg*

TWO MUSLIM TERRORISTS held under Britain's controversial "control order powers"—an Iraqi with possible links to Al Qaeda and a British citizen likely connected to the London Underground bombings last year—have escaped, as Tony Blair's government reluctantly acknowledged on October 16. Both were suspected of being linked to international terrorist groups, and, in a sane world, both should have been held under lock and key until the investigation into their cases was complete. They were granted theoretically supervised freedom under "control orders" instead, a device created in March 2005 after the Law Lords ruled four months earlier that the detention without charge of 12 foreign suspects in London's Belmarsh prison was illegal.

Under this system, suspects are subjected to curfew in their residences, electronically tagged, banned from associating with certain people or using the internet, and may get unannounced visits from the police. The orders are intended to control the movements of suspected terrorists whose cases are unlikely to come to trial any time soon, mostly because the evidence against them would expose another ongoing investigation. Only 15 such orders are currently in force, 9 against foreign nationals and 6 against British citizens, although MI5 (Britain's FBI equivalent) has identified some 1,200 individuals suspected of being involved in some form of terrorist activity. Six others were removed last spring, after the High Court ruled that they were "conspicuously unfair" and incompatible with the Human Rights Act.

An additional absurdity of the case is that the authorities refuse to disclose the names of the two suspects, even though,

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by violating the terms of their control orders, they have committed a criminal offense. Another is the emphatic assurance by a London-police spokesman that "every effort is being made by police to ensure no particular community is criminalized or victimized in any way."

The only real reason the two escapees and most of the other 1,200 suspects are at large instead of serving long-term sentences in top-security jails is the refusal of the Blair government to change the law and allow "intercept evidence"—obtained from tapping phones and e-mails—to be made admissible in court. According to one frustrated law-enforcement official, "[T]here could be hundreds of hours of material in Urdu which need to be translated by MI5 translators [taking] months of work when these linguists are also needed on live operations."

The case of two escapees provides a primer on how not to fight the "War on Terror." Flawed laws and bizarre cultural assumptions have ensured that today's England is a breeding ground for Muslim terrorists. In some ways, it is a hotbed more dangerous than even Pakistan: The jihadists are often British-born and educated, and the country's ruling establishment insists on describing them as "Britons," because such a designation has wonderfully multiculturalist implications.

It can hardly be otherwise in a country led by the man who declared that September 11 "was not the work of Islamic terrorists, it was not the work of Muslim terrorists, it was the work of terrorists, pure and simple." Echoing the prime minister, two weeks after September 11, former Home Office Minister John Denham pledged to cut out the "cancer of Islamophobia" infecting Britain; declaring that "the real Islam is a religion of peace, tolerance and understanding," he urged the media to avoid promoting "a distorted or caricatured or prejudiced" view of Muslims. The director of public prosecutions, for his part, insists that the War on Terror must stop "alienating whole communities" in England. The mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, went one better and blamed Britain's role in the war in Iraq for the explosions that killed 56 Londoners in July 2005.

Top brass toe the line: When asked if the bombings were the work of Islamic terrorists, the Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner Brian Paddick responded that the culprits "certainly were not Islamic terrorists, because Islam and terrorism simply don't go together." Paddick's boss, Commissioner Sir Ian Blair, declared that "there is nothing wrong with being an Islamic fundamentalist." They merely follow their political masters into a state of denial and willful self-delusion regarding the threat. The courts, for their part, routinely interpret the criminal, asylum, and terrorism laws in a manner damaging to the security of the Realm and favorable to the Islamic underground.

Meanwhile, that underground thrives in hundreds of mosques, state-supported educational institutions, and community centers. There are 200 after-hours Islamic schools all over Britain in which Muslim children start formal indoctrination in the "prophet's" creed. That message, rooted in rock-hard certainties, very effectively overrides the tepid multiculturalist message of the state curriculum. Maintaining the loyalty of the Muslim diaspora in Britain has been the *mullahs*' top priority, and the country's rulers have facilitated their task.

With the Blairites in charge, T.S. Eliot may yet be proved right in his warning that the West would end, "not with a bang but a whimper." Some decades earlier, in 1899, a 26-year-old Winston Churchill expressed hope "that if evil days should come upon our own country, and the last army which a collapsing Empire could interpose between London and the invader were dissolving in rout and ruin, that there would be some—even in these modern days—who would not care to accustom themselves to a new order of things and tamely survive the disaster." Even his prescience could not envisage the possibility that "the invader" would have his friends and allies at No. 10 and London's County Hall.

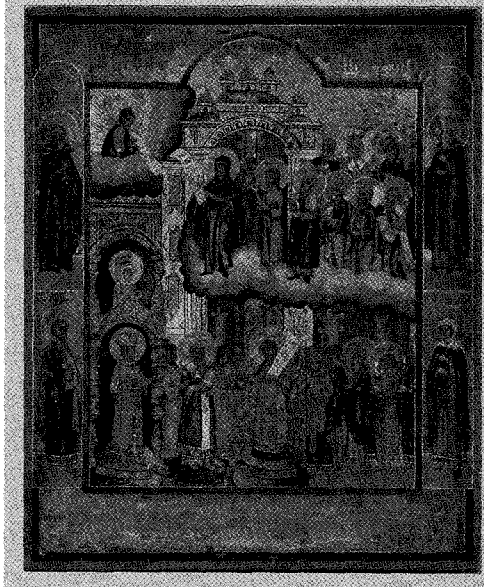
—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA: Our cover was graciously provided by Don Springer, proprietor of the Slava Gallery in Alexandria, Virginia (*www.slavagal.com*).

Our poet this month is **Tina Brown-Warren**, making her *Chronicles* debut. A retired library clerk from the University of Illinois Slavic and East European Library, Mrs. Brown-Warren's poetry has appeared in *Romantics Quarterly* and the *Lyric*. She writes from Urbana, Illinois.

Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson** and **Nicholas Garrie**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

ABOUT THE COVER



Our cover is a detail from an 18th-century Central Russian icon of the *Pokrov*, the Protection of the Holy Mother of God. In the Eastern Church, the Feast of the Protection is celebrated on October 1 and commemorates a miracle that occurred at Blachernae, in Constantinople, where the *omophorion* or veil of the Blessed Virgin was kept. Each Friday at matins, the veil, covering an image of the Virgin formed of wax and the ashes of martyrs, was lifted. In 911, at the end of an all-night vigil, while the city was under attack, St. Andrew of Constantinople saw the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by St. John the Baptist and St. John the Theologian, enter the church. She spread her cloak over the congregation as a symbol of protection, and the city was spared.

Similar apparitions occurred during Islamic incursions into Europe, and local versions of the icon celebrate the protection of Christian cities from the Muslims.

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by Thomas Fleming

Jihad's Fifth Column

No one on the planet, by now, has not heard of the violence that greeted Pope Benedict's references to Emperor Manuel II and his reflections on Islam. Manuel, invariably (and unfairly) described as "obscure" or "forgotten," lived in one of those interesting ages of the world that teach lessons to those who are not blind and deaf. In his father's lifetime, the Eastern Roman Empire's powers of resistance had sunk so low that John V had to swear fealty to Murad I, the Ottoman sultan. Manuel had himself been a hostage at Sultan Bayezid's court and was forced to fight against his own empire. His old host, Bayezid, laid siege to Constantinople from 1394 to 1402, and, like his father, Manuel went on a fruitless journey to the West in search of support. Fortunately, Timur and his Tartar horde defeated and killed Bayezid, giving the empire a short breathing space.

Manuel married a Serbian noblewoman, Jelena, the daughter of Constantine Dragaš. Constantine had been a wise statesman who fully understood the Ottoman threat to Europe. He survived the disastrous battle of the Marica River that doomed the northern Balkans to the Ottoman yoke, but, forced to become Bayezid's vassal, he died fighting the Christian Wallachians. This was ever the Turkish tactic: to keep the West divided against itself.

To understand the suicidal conduct of Western states today, we have to look back to their history, back to the fatal period of the 15th and 16th centuries when the Ottomans were rolling across the Balkans and across the Danubian Plain. By the mid-15th century, they were poised to devour Hungary and the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and threatened even Italy. The 100 years between 1450 and 1550 were an almost unmitigated disaster for the West. Constantinople was lost forever, the Serbian state annihilated, and Hungary—the bulwark of the West—disastrously defeated at Mohacs in 1526. The only really bright spot was Spain, which finally expelled the Moors and their collaborators in 1492. In the east, there was no good news except for Belgrade, which unexpectedly withstood a massive Turkish siege led in person by Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople. But Belgrade (like Lepanto 115 years later) was truly one of those exceptions that prove the rule, a brief moment when Hungarians, Serbs, and Rumanians could join with the papacy in a common crusade.

The Ottoman threat became urgent in 1451, when Mehmed II ascended the throne. Though not apparently a faithful Muslim, he was determined to make a reputation for himself by eliminating the last vestiges of the Eastern Empire. He accomplished the task in 1453, when he broke into Constantinople and sacked the city that would be turned into his capital. The last emperor of the Romans, Constantine XI, the grandson of Constantine Dragaš, fell defending his city. Thus began over 500 years of terror for the Greeks of "the city" and of Asia Minor. Mehmed had at first been conciliatory to some of the anti-Latin elements in the city, promising protection to Admiral Lukas Notaras, the man who had sworn that he would rather see the crescent flying over his city than a papal flag. Notaras, a brave man, learned his mistake the hard way. After a few drinks, Mehmed summoned the admiral's young son, whom he wished to rape. When Notaras refused, he and his sons were butchered for the amusement of the sultan's dinner guests.

Encouraged by Italian intellectuals, Mehmed began to think of himself as the emperor of the entire Roman world and planned to make good his claim by taking over what was left of Serbia, eliminating Hungary as a threat, and seizing control of Albania and the Dalmatian Coast, from which he apparently intended to launch an invasion of Italy. If ever the West faced a threat, this was it. Not since the days of Hannibal had one ruler commanded such military resources and strategic vision. To conquer Hungary, though, Mehmed would have to subjugate what was left of Serbia and take control of the Danube, which was guarded by the Hungarian-held fortress of Belgrade, a city which both he and his father regarded as central to their strategy. Although a far smaller prize than Constantinople, Belgrade was the key to a kingdom far more significant than the last remnant of the Byzantine Empire. He moved quickly into Serbia in 1454 but was stopped by a Hungarian force capable of skirmishing with the Turks but not of fixing a pitched battle.

By the summer of 1455, Mehmed had fixed the doom of Belgrade and vowed that he would storm the citadel, conquer Hungary in two months, and eat his dinner in Buda. He besieged the Serbian commercial center Novo Brdo, and, believing the sultan's promise of fair treatment, the town surrendered, only to have their property stolen. The people were made slaves. Good-looking women were given to the soldiers, while the sultan kept the best-looking boys and young men.

While Serbia and Constantinople were under attack, England and France were concluding the ruthless Hundred Years' War. But even after expelling the English, French kings were occupied with expanding their power and would do their best to frustrate any crusade to recover the Balkans. In the 16th century, Francis I made a famous alliance with Sultan Suleyman against Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. France agreed to attack Austria—thus aiding and abetting Suleyman's campaign to conquer Vienna—and would receive northern Italy in payment. Southern Italy, as former possessions of the Eastern Roman Empire, would be handed over to the tender mercies of the Turks.

Francis I was hardly the only French king to collaborate with the enemy. In 1683, when the Polish king Jan Sobieski drove the Turks from the gates of Vienna, Habsburg generals went on to drive them out of Buda and Transylvania and to recapture Belgrade. Serbs rose up to throw off their chains. The Balkans might have been rescued, had Louis XIV not decided to attack the empire in Germany.

If France was willing to sell out the

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Christian East, the Italian states were no better. When the king of Naples considered hiring Skanderbeg, the half-Serb hero of the Albanian resistance, as a mercenary, his rival, the lord of Rimini, threatened to invite the Turks into Italy.

The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, who came to the throne in 1453, was no crusader. As indolent as he was fat, Frederick would not lift a finger if he could avoid it, even to oppose the Turkish raids that threatened his own borders. His advisor, the Sienese humanist Aeneas Sylvius Picolomini, was more of a man. This Latin scholar and future Pope Pius II would die of illness, looking out the window from his room in Ancona, as his doomed crusade was supposed to set sail. The popes in general were alarmed by the progress of Islam. They had wanted to defend Constantinople, but they made aid contingent on acknowledgement of papal supremacy. The Greek emperor had submitted in 1439, but the divisions this introduced among his Orthodox subjects was fatal.

Popes could no longer summon crusaders from all over Europe. European princes coveted the Church's lands, the conciliar movement had weakened papal authority, and the Church Herself was racked by schisms encouraged by French kings and German emperors. No one heeded Nicholas V's call for a crusade to save Constantinople in 1453. Though his successor, Calixtus III, took an oath that "by war maledictions, interdicts, and all other means in my power I will pursue the Turks, the most cruel enemies of the Christian name," he, too, received no support. In those years, Rome's most valuable support came in the form of talented men she sent to the cause: Aeneas Silvius; the papal legate Cardinal Cesarini, who took the field on the ill-fated Varna Crusade in which he died; and, most remarkable of all, the elderly preacher John of Capistrano, who was sent in 1456 to Hungary, where he recruited a body of peasant crusaders, who—despite their lack of discipline—were to break the siege of Belgrade.

If the Muslims were to be stopped, the job would have to be done by the peoples on the front line: Hungarians, Wallachians, Serbs, and Albanians. During the 15th century, the powerful Hungarian state was bogged down in civil wars over the throne, but the Madyars found a true statesman in Janos Hunyadi, whose fundamental policy was an unremitting crusade against the Turk. Hunyadi, who had the courage to fight the Ottomans even when he was badly outnumbered, never let himself be discouraged by defeat.

Janos Hunyadi had little support from the Hungarian nobility, who had long since decided to abandon the Serbian despot George Branković, who ruled over a Serbian rump state on the Danube, to his fate. The young Hungarian King Ladislas borrowed money from Hunyadi on the pretext of putting together a war chest, but hearing of Mehmed's approach, he discovered a sudden urge to abandon Buda to go on an extended hunting trip. One of Hunyadi's few allies was the young Wallachian prince Vlad, who agreed to guard the passes into Rumania, where a turncoat prince had made a deal with Mehmed. This Vlad Drakula would become famous for the savagery he learned from the Turks and used against them and their false Christian allies.

Hunyadi also expected support from the Serbs. Although the Serbs had suffered a series of disastrous defeats before and after the national catastrophe at Kosovo in 1389, the Serbian despotate was still a significant Balkan power. The Serbian despot Djuradj Branković was a remarkable man. Born before the Battle of Kosovo (1389), which broke up medieval Serbia, he fought campaign after campaign—with the Hungarians against the Turks, and with the Turks against Hungarians—to keep his despotate alive. His task was complicated by power-seeking rivals in Bosnia and especially in Montenegro, where Stefanica Crnojević—the role model for the current president of Montenegro—embraced Islam and joined the Turks. Turkish conquests had moved its center of power north toward the Danube, but Branković, though he had been driven from his country by Sultan Murad II (his own son-in-law), was also one of the most powerful noble dynasts in Hungary and nearly placed the crown of Saint Stephen on his son's head.

Backed by a large part of the Hungarian nobility, Branković had tried to persuade the widowed queen to marry his son Lazar, but her reply foreshadowed the coming centuries of religious strife between Catholic Hungarians and Orthodox Serbs: "Better to marry a Hungarian peasant than a schismatic prince." In the ensuing power-struggle, Branković was driven out of his extensive Hungarian estates, but this did not prevent him, later, from joining forces again with the Hungarians, led by Janos Hunyadi, on the Long Campaign in which their combined armies defeated the Turks in Serbia and Bulgaria.

Murad was forced to acknowledge Djuradj, once again, as ruler of an autonomous vassal state, but, when the Hungarians broke their treaty with the Turks and ravaged their way across Serbia only to be defeated at another Kosovo battle, the enraged despot imprisoned Hunyadi and held him for ransom.

On the eve of Mehmed's invasion, the despot had given up all hope of help. He had been willing, once again, to settle differences with his enemy Hunyadi, who had taken possession of the despot's confiscated Hungarian estates. When, in June 1455, Branković attended a special meeting to consider the emergency, however, John of Capistrano, recently arrived from his missionary labors among the Hussites, let his zeal for the Church get the better of his judgment. The missionary preacher told the despot that he would receive help only if he renounced Orthodoxy and acknowledged the pope. The 80-year-old despot was disgusted: "I have lived a long life and acquired a reputation for wisdom. People would think me a fool if I renounced the religion of my ancestors that I have practiced for 80 years."

In disgust, Branković capitulated to the sultan, and the papal legate left Hungary to persuade Pope Callixtus III to send a fleet against Constantinople to distract Mehmed, but the best the Pope could do was to grant a plenary indulgence to any soldier who took the cross against the infidel. That would prove to be enough.

Belgrade's defenders (no more than 7,000 men) waited nervously to see who would arrive first, the Turks or the Hungarians. Although the citadel was off-limits to Serbs, they were the dominant population of the town. On June 13, Mehmed ended the suspense, arriving before Belgrade with his vast army. (The Western estimate was about 15,000, but this may be too high.) By the end of the month, his cannons were booming away at the blockaded citadel, now called Kalamegdan.

Because his Turks were still primitive in military technology, the sultan relied heavily on foreigners. Germans, Hungarians, Bosnians, and Dalmatians manned his principal cannons, all of which had been constructed by Western Christian craftsmen—North Italians, Germans, and Hungarians. Selling the rope has been a Western art since the 15th century.

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The story of the siege is the stuff of legend. Hunyadi, with his Hungarian regulars, and Saint John, with his ragtag army and with 40 boats filled with Serbian archers, arrived on July 14. They broke the blockade on the Danube, and the allies made their way into the beleaguered city. On the 21st, Mehmed attacked in force with his crack troops who, after a fierce battle, were only barely driven back from the fort. A Turk nearly succeeded in planting the sultan's banner on the wall, but one of the defenders named Titus Dugović seized the Turk, and they fell down the slope together. Titus was later ennobled by Mathias Corvinus.

What happened the next day is still a mystery. The Turks had been repulsed, but, unless Mehmed was willing to retreat, Belgrade was doomed. The accounts are confused, but it is agreed that some of Capistrano's peasants left their bunkers and began insulting the enemy, who ignored them until their numbers increased and they began harassing the Turks. Hunyadi had suspected some such insubordination and apparently warned Saint John to bring them back, but he, too, caught the fever, and, lifting up the cross, he cried out, "What God has started, we shall finish!" The Turks, who were not used to this sort of zeal, panicked, then ran. Hunyadi, seeing what happened, sent his soldiers into the fray and, along with the pilgrims, they slaughtered thousands of Turks and seriously wounded the sultan himself. On the slow march back to Adrianople, the Serbs killed thousands more. After the repulse, the defenders discovered two Venetian ships, out of a contingent of six that had been outfitted and manned by the Serenissima and sent to aid their Muslim allies. Bells were rung throughout Europe, and the Pope declared the day he heard the news of the Christian victory to be the happiest day of his life. Belgrade was saved, only to be lost by a later generation of Hungarians who had learned nothing from the career of the great Janos or his son, King Mathias Corvinus. Let us not forget the lessons.

Today, the West is facing a challenge from Islam that is more serious, perhaps, than any we have faced since the days when Suleyman the Magnificent besieged Vienna in 1526. Now as then, the West seems unable to make a united front to defend its interests. Republican politicians make flowery speeches about waging a "War on Terror," but, under a Republican president, Islamic immigration in the United States has increased in the past five years since the events of September 11.

Although Republican strategist Grover Norquist has even forged an alliance with Islamic groups that have transparent ties to terrorist organizations, Karl Rove, echoing Gertrude Stein, says of Norquist's antics, "There's no there there." Norquist's defenders say he has turned over a new leaf, but his critics perceive that he has only learned to be more careful. Grover Norquist is not the only collaborator in the Republican Party. Albanian nationalists have supported a long list of party leaders—most notoriously, Bob Dole—who have delivered up the sacred Christian land of Kosovo-Metohija as the price.

American politicians who take Muslim bribes or allow themselves to be intimidated by threats from CAIR are like the renegades of the 16th century who filled their pockets by betraying their Faith and their people. We cannot fight a War on Terror until Christian Americans refuse to vote for members of the *jihad*'s Fifth Column.

Opacity
by Tina Brown-Warren

The day I met you,
My life shattered into a hundred, a thousand, say
Ten thousand pieces—

(Or perhaps only two—
Before and after you).

The ten thousand pieces I've long since
Swept up:
Discarding the smaller, more piercing fragments;
Smoothing and polishing the rest,
So as not to cut you any further;
So as to polish and make shine

Your reflected glory,
And my own
Opacity.

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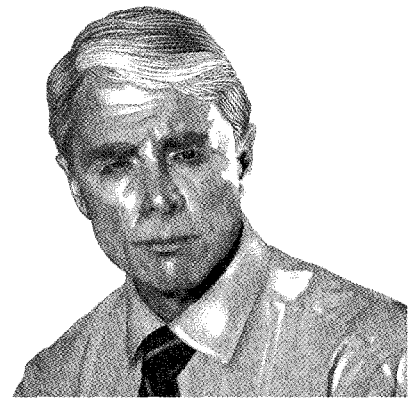
by Roger D. McGrath

"Scratch One Flattop"



It was America's first naval battle of World War II, Japan's first loss at sea in the war, the battle that saved Australia from a Japanese invasion, the greatest naval battle in Australian waters, the first carrier battle, and the first battle in which the opposing fleets never came within sight of each other or fired at each other, ship to ship. Rarely mentioned in American textbooks today and unknown to most students, the Battle of the Coral Sea not only was one of the war's most important battles but marked the opening of a new age in naval warfare and demonstrated that American sailors and naval aviators were more than a match for their Japanese counterparts.

Lying off Australia's northeast coast, the Coral Sea is a stunningly beautiful body of water. Its bright sunshine, clean air, and translucent water, which varies from the deepest to the lightest blues and greens, made the Coral Sea an ironic site for the deadly game of war.

Early in May 1942, Japan launched Operation Mo, designed to capture Port Moresby, on New Guinea's southeast coast. Control of Port Moresby would give Japan a base that would make the Coral Sea a Japanese lake and a base that could be used as a staging area for an invasion of Australia. The latter idea was not far-fetched. Japan had three times as many men in her army and navy as Australia had people. In March 1942, Japan's prime minister, Gen. Hideki Tojo, had warned, "Australia and New Zealand are now threatened by the might of the Imperial forces, and both of them should know that any resistance is futile."

Because Navy cryptanalysts had broken the Japanese fleet code, Adm. Chester Nimitz knew enough of Operation Mo to dispatch Rear Adm. Frank Jack Fletcher and Task Force 17 with her 2 carriers, 8 cruisers, 11 destroyers, and support craft to the Coral Sea.

Although scattered and far-flung actions began on May 4, the real battle started three days later when Japanese scout planes spotted the American oiler *Neosho* (although the name sounds Japanese, it comes from an Osage Indian name) and her escort, the destroyer *Sims*. Reported by the scout planes as a "carrier and a cruiser," the Japanese launched dozens of planes in two waves to attack these putative high-value targets. *Sims* was sunk with heavy casualties; *Neosho* was so badly damaged that she became a drifting wreck and was later abandoned.

In the meantime, an American scout plane spotted the Japanese carrier *Shoho* and her four accompanying cruisers. Carriers *Yorktown* and *Lexington* launched more than 90 planes that found *Shoho* 160 miles away. Leading the attack was Lt. John J. Powers, a New York City-born graduate of the Naval Academy. Through enemy fighters and intense antiaircraft fire, he dove nearly into the deck of *Shoho* before releasing his bomb. A tremendous explosion rocked the carrier. Static interfered with radio transmissions to *Yorktown* and *Lexington*, but suddenly, the voice of another pilot, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Dixon, came through loud and clear: "Scratch one flattop. Dixon to carrier. Scratch one flattop." Late in the day, the Japanese launched some 30 planes to search for the American carriers. Most of the planes were intercepted and shot down by American fighters or lost while trying to find their own carriers in the dark. A few made their way back to their carriers only to crash when attempting night landings. Mistaking an American carrier for a Japanese, one enemy pilot joined American planes in the landing pattern. He must have been shocked when he began to set down on the deck only to be blasted overboard in a hail of gunfire.

Early the next morning, the opposing forces began launching planes again. Powers told his pilots in the ready room, "Remember the folks back home are counting on us. I'm going to get a hit if I have to lay it right on their flight deck." By late morning, Powers and others from *Yorktown* and *Lexington* were pounding the Japanese carrier *Shokaku*. Powers again flew nearly into the carrier's deck before releasing his bomb and scoring a direct hit. He was last seen trying to pull up through a cloud of fire, smoke, debris, and exploding shells. He and others had left *Shokaku* so heavily damaged that all she could do was limp northward in retreat. Her sister carrier, *Zuikaku*, steaming behind a squall line, went undetected by American planes.

While American pilots were pounding *Shokaku*, Japanese carrier planes were reaching *Yorktown* and *Lexington*, both sailing under bright, clear skies. Torpedoes and bombs hit "Lady Lex," but fast action by her crew brought the resulting fires under control—for a time. Then, a spark from an unshielded electric fan caused secondary explosions and fires erupted everywhere. Capt. Frederick Sherman finally gave the order to abandon ship. Unlike how it would be misrepresented by some hysterical movie director today, the sailors calmly lined up on the flight deck and climbed down lines dangling into the sea. Some sailors had the good sense to raid the galley and deliver ice cream to their shipmates waiting a turn to go overboard. Sherman was the last to leave the ship. Hours later, a U.S. destroyer put four torpedoes into *Lexington* and sank her, lest she miraculously survive the fires and explosions and fall into enemy hands. Meanwhile, *Yorktown* was badly damaged by a bomb hit but was still fully operational.

By the afternoon of May 8, the battle was over. The United States had lost a carrier, a destroyer, and an oiler, 66 planes, and some 550 men. We also had a carrier badly damaged. Japan had lost a carrier, a destroyer, and three smaller ships, 77 planes, and nearly 1,100 men. She also had a carrier badly damaged. Tactically, the battle could be called a draw; strategically, it was a great American (and Australian—she had ships participate as well) victory. The Japanese would never again threaten Port Moresby, let alone Australia. Every year since 1946, Australia has commemorated the Battle of the Coral Sea and has honored such American heroes as John J. Powers, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Australia has not forgotten, but it seems that America has.

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Eurabian Nights

A Horror Travelogue

by Srdja Trifkovic

Thousands of young Muslims, armed with clubs and sticks and shouting, "*Allahu akbar!*" riot and force the police to retreat. Windows are smashed; stores are looted; cars are torched. Europeans unlucky or careless enough to be trapped by the mob are viciously attacked, and some are killed.

The scene could be Mogadishu in the aftermath of Pope Benedict's Regensburg address; or Tripoli during the Danish-cartoons fury; or Karachi, Kabul, Gaza, and countless other cities in *Dar al-Islam*'s heartland, on any number of occasions. Yet a year ago, such scenes were unfolding, for weeks on end, in places with such names as Clichy-sous-Bois, Argenteuil, and La Courneuve. The trouble in the *banlieus* finally ended, as various Muslim "community leaders" had claimed it would, only when various levels of French officialdom quietly accepted that there were *de facto* no-go areas within the country, mini-Islamistans run by the dominant local majority. "*Mon Clichy à moi, c'est ça!*" just about sums it up, on the official website of Clichy-sous-Bois, whose population is 80-percent Muslim.

In practice, this means that local groceries refrain from selling wine, and young Muslim men feel emboldened to use violence against "sluts"—women who do not follow Islamic ways. Many more French-born Arab girls wear the *hijab* today than did so a year ago: It is their protection against mutilation and gang rape. Failing to do so makes them fair game for both: A knife slash across the scarfless girl's cheek from the lip to the ear is especially common and known as a "smile."

The demand for communal self-rule is not new, and it will be made with increasing frequency in the years to come. Of some 25 million Muslims in Western Europe, the majority already consider themselves autonomous, a community justifiably opposed to the decadent host society of infidels. This demand is but the first step: It will lead to the clamoring for the adoption of *sharia* within segregated Muslim communities and, finally, for the imposition of *sharia* on the society as a whole.

Europe's elite class is prepared for this challenge. Dutch Justice Minister Piet Hein Donner—a Christian Democrat—sees the demand as perfectly legitimate and argues that *sharia* could be introduced "by democratic means." Muslims have a right to follow the commands of their religion, even if that included some "dissenting rules of behavior": "It is a sure certainty for me: if two thirds of all Netherlanders tomorrow would want to introduce Sharia, then this possibility must exist. Could you block this legally? It would also be a scandal to say 'this isn't allowed'! The majority counts. That is the essence of democracy."

The same "essence" was reiterated in similar terms last July by Jens Orback, the Swedish Integration [*sic*] Minister, who declared in a radio debate, "We must be open and tolerant towards Islam and Muslims because when we become a minority, they will be so towards us." Yes, *when we become a minority*; the fact that, four months later, both Orback and his Social Democratic government remain in power aptly illustrates Sweden's political and cultural scene.

Until a generation ago, Sweden used to be one of the safest and most law-abiding countries in the world. Today, in the southern city of Malmö, the authorities are no longer able to deal with the problem of crime among Muslim immigrants, 90 percent of whom are on welfare. They make up one third of the city's 300,000 people; at the city's Rosengrad School, of 1,000 students, only 2 were Swedes last year. "If we park our car it will be smashed—so we have to go very often in two vehicles, one just to protect the other," says policeman Rolf Landgren. Both vehicles are needed to escort Swedish ambulance drivers into certain neighborhoods. Robberies of all sorts increased by 50 percent in 2004 alone, with gangs of young Muslims specializing in mugging old people visiting the graves of relatives. Thomas Anderberg, head of statistics for the Malmö police, reported a doubling of "rapes by ambush" in 2004. Almost all of the increase is attributable to Muslim men raping Swedish women.

Next door in Norway and Denmark, two thirds of all men arrested for rape are "of non-western ethnic origin"—the preferred euphemism for Middle Eastern and North African Muslims—although they account for under five percent of their residents. The number of rapes in Oslo in the summer of 2006 was twice that of the previous summer. All "gang rapes" in Denmark in 2004 were committed by immigrants and "refugees."

The victims are overwhelmingly Scandinavian women, yet only one in twenty young Muslim men say they would marry one. Their reluctance is explained by an Islamic scholar, Mufti Shahid Mehdi, who told an audience in Copenhagen that European women who do not wear a headscarf were "asking to be raped." His view is shared by Unni Wikan, a professor of social anthropology at the University of Oslo and a self-described feminist; she holds that "Norwegian women must take their share of responsibility for these rapes" because Muslim men found their manner of dress provocative: "Norwegian women must realize that we live in a multicultural society and they must adapt themselves to it."

Swedish courts are adapting by introducing *sharia* principles into civil cases. An Iranian man divorcing his Iranian wife was ordered by the high court in the city of Halmestad to pay *Mahr*, Islamic dowry ordained by the Koran as part of the Islamic marriage contract.

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In the judicial sphere, Britain has gone even further, legitimizing *sharia* compliance even in criminal cases. A key tenet of *sharia* is that non-Muslims cannot try Muslims, or even testify against them; and this has been upheld by Peter Beaumont, QC, senior circuit judge at London's Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey. Before the trial of Abdullah el-Faisal, a preacher accused of soliciting the murder of "unbelievers," Justice Beaumont announced that, "[f]or obvious reasons, members of the jury of the Jewish or Hindu faith should reveal themselves, even if they are married to Jewish or Hindu women, because they are not fit to arbitrate in this case." (One can only speculate what would be the reaction if equally "obvious reasons" were invoked in an attempt to exclude Muslims from the trial of BNP Chairman Nick Griffin for "Islamophobia.")

The legitimization of *sharia* has also penetrated culture—both high and popular. In the fall of 2005, British audiences enjoyed a widely acclaimed production of *Tamburlaine the Great*, Christopher Marlowe's 16th-century classic. Few noticed, however, that several irreverent references to Muhammad had been deleted. An essential scene in the play, in which the Koran is burned, became the destruction of "a load of books" relating to any culture or religion. Director David Farr and Simon Reade, Old Vic's artistic director, said that, if they had not altered the original, it "would have unnecessarily raised the hackles of a significant proportion of one of the world's great religions." Both agreed that, in any event, the censored version—produced partly with public funds—was better than the original, making the play more powerful and relevant.

The British Council, another taxpayer-funded organization that sponsors cross-cultural projects, sacked one of its press officers, Harry Cummins, for publishing four articles in London's *Sunday Telegraph*. British Muslims took exception to his observation that Muslims had rights to practice their religion in the United Kingdom that were not enjoyed by Christians in the Islamic world, "despite the fact that these Christians are the original inhabitants and rightful owners of almost every Muslim land." His cardinal sin was to note that "it is the black heart of Islam, not its black face, to which millions object." Abdul Bari, deputy secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, welcomed Cummins' firing but expressed "dismay" that the publishing company had not taken action against the editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* as well.

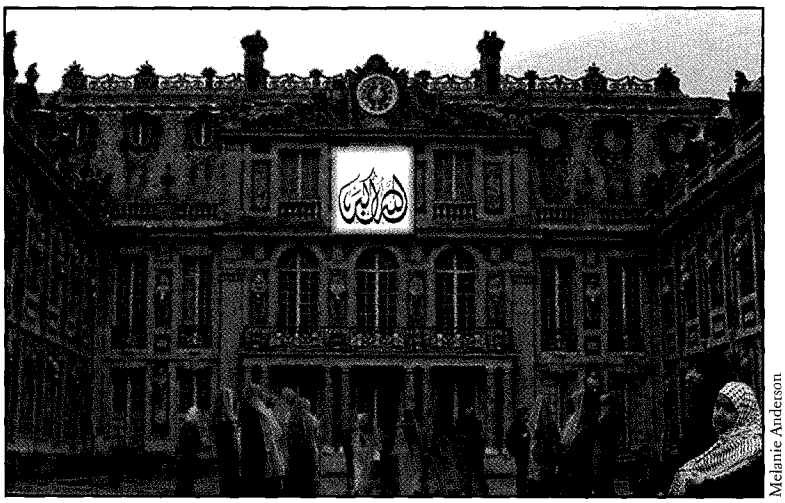
Public funds were also used to build state-of-the-art senior housing in London's East End. This housing is to be reserved strictly for Muslim "elders": English and other white pensioners need not apply. Sirajul Islam, in charge of social services at the local borough of Tower Hamlets, responded to the journalists' questions about racial and religious equality by stating that a "one size fits all" approach to public services was no longer acceptable in 21st-century Britain: "Tower Hamlets is fortunate to have a diverse mix of communities, and the council strives to ensure that its services are responsive to the differing and changing needs of its residents."

That these and other fortunes are befalling Britain under "New Labour" is perhaps to be expected, but the revamped Tory Party hardly offers an alternative. Determined that out-Blairing Blair is the only way to regain power, it has, under David Cameron, jumped on the multiculturalist bandwagon and come out in support of retaining and expanding racial, ethnic, and sex-based quotas. Cameron's colleague, Conservative Party Chairman Francis Maude, claims that immigration has been "fantastically good" for the United Kingdom.

Such inanities are light years away from Churchill's warning, over a century ago, that "no stronger retrograde force exists in the world" than Islam:

> Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science—the science against which it had vainly struggled—the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome.

Churchill's prescience could not envisage the possibility that the invader would find his best friends and allies at No. 10, Downing Street, at the European Community Headquarters in Brussels, and in dozens of chancelleries and palaces across the Old Continent. Their joint efforts are helping change the face of Europe. Its southern maritime frontier is as porous as that on the Rio Grande. Boats packed with thousands of migrants from Africa and Asia land somewhere along Europe's coasts every day. Their numbers are unknown, but the cumulative effect is not in doubt: By 2050, these people will account for one third of Europe's young residents.



Melanie Anderson

In Germany, mostly Muslim immigrants already account for about one quarter of all teenagers and ten percent of the population as a whole. But mention "integration" to Evelyn Rühle, a teacher in Wedding, a predominantly Turkish suburb of Berlin, and she will murmur, "disintegration, more likely," with a sad smile. Her students' Muslim parents routinely demand the separation of girls and boys in sports and take their children out of biology classes. Most students speak poorer German than immigrant children did 20 years ago. Their extracurricular activities are limited to attending Koran classes, and many speak only Turkish or Arabic at home.

The growth of digital television has made a host of Turkish and Arabic-language channels available, intensifying language problems and nurturing identities that are informed more by the situation in Lebanon, Gaza, or Iraq than by the events in Paris, Berlin, or London. Millions of Muslim youths all over Europe live in a parallel universe that has very little to do with the host country, toward which they have a disdainful and

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hostile attitude.

The elite class responds to hostility with ever-greater inclusiveness. Giuseppe Pisanu, Italy's former minister of the interior, who is responsible for controlling the country's borders, declared three years ago that the high fatality rate of North African illegals on the high seas *en route* to Sicily was "a dreadful tragedy that weighs on the conscience of Europe." His reaction was paradigmatic of the utopian liberal mind-set. If "Europe" should feel guilty that people who have no right to come to its shores are risking their lives while trying to do so illegally, then only the establishment of a free passenger-ferry service between Africa and Southern Europe—with no passport or customs formalities required upon arrival, and a free shuttle to Rome or Milan—would offer some relief to that burdened conscience. Now that Sr. Pisanu and his boss, Silvio Berlusconi, have been replaced by a leftist government even more deeply committed to tolerance and diversity, this solution may finally become a reality.

By the end of this century, there will be no "Europeans" who are members of ethnic groups that share the same language, culture, history, and ancestors. The shrinking populations will be indoctrinated into believing that the demographic shift in favor of Muslim aliens is actually a blessing that enriches their culturally deprived and morally unsustainable societies.

The tangible results in Italy are as devastating as the moral and spiritual ones. In Venice, the invaders have taken over the Piazza San Marco. In Genoa, the marvelous *palazzi* that Rubens so admired have been seized by them "and are now perishing like beautiful women who have been raped." In the late Oriana Fallaci's native Florence, a huge tent was erected next to the cathedral to pressure the Italian government to give immigrants "the papers necessary to rove about Europe," and to "let them bring the hordes of their relatives" to Italy. As Fallaci described it:

> A tent situated next to the beautiful palazzo of the Archbishop on whose sidewalk they kept the shoes or sandals that are lined up outside the mosques in their countries. And along with the shoes or sandals, the empty bottles of water they'd used to wash their feet before praying. A tent placed in front of the cathedral with Brunelleschi's cupola and by the side of the Baptistery with Ghiberti's golden doors . . . Thanks to a tape player, the uncouth wailing of a muezzin punctually exhorted the faithful, deafened the infidels, and smothered the sound of the church bells . . . And along with the yellow streaks of urine, the stench of the excrement that blocked the door of San Salvatore al Vescovo: that exquisite Romanesque church (year 1000) that stands at the rear of the Piazza del Duomo and that the sons of Allah transformed into a shithouse.

Europe is increasingly populated by aliens who physically live there but spiritually belong to the *umma*. They do not want to "adapt" to Florence or any other new abode they conquer; offended and intimidated by beauty and order, they instinctively want to remake it in the image of Anatolia, Punjab, or the Maghreb. Their influx, made possible by the Pisanu malaise, is making the transformation irreversible.

A century ago, Pisanu's class shared social commonalities that could be observed in Monte Carlo, Carlsbad, or Paris, depending on the season. Their *lingua franca* was French. Englishmen, Russians, and Austrians shared the same outlook and sense of propriety, but they nevertheless remained rooted in their national traditions, the only permanent vessels in which *Weltanschauung* could be translated into *Kultur*. Today's "United Europe," by contrast, does not create social and civilizational commonalities—except on the basis of wholesale denial of old mores, inherited values, and "traditional" culture. It creates a cultural similarity that has morphed into the dreary sameness of antidiscriminationism. The Continent is ruled by a secular theocracy focused on the task of reforming and reshaping the individual consciences of its subjects.

The fruits are greeted with haughty arrogance by Tariq Ramadan, professor of Islamic studies at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, and a grandson of Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ramadan insists that Muslims in the West should conduct themselves not as hyphenated citizens seeking to live by "common values" but as though they were already living in a Muslim-majority society and were exempt on that account from having to make concessions to the faith of others. Muslims in non-Muslim countries should feel entitled to live on their own terms, Ramadan says, while, "under the terms of Western liberal tolerance," society as a whole should be obliged to respect that choice.

If such respect continues to be extended, by the end of this century, there will be no "Europeans" who are members of ethnic groups that share the same language, culture, history, and ancestors and inhabit lands associated with their names. The shrinking populations will be indoctrinated into believing—or else simply forced into accepting—that the demographic shift in favor of Muslim aliens is actually a blessing that enriches their culturally deprived and morally unsustainable societies.

The "liberal tolerance" and the accompanying "societal obligation" that Tariq Ramadan invokes are key. "No other race subscribes to these moral principles," Jean Raspail wrote a generation ago, "because they are weapons of self-annihilation." They need to be understood and discarded. The upholders of those principles must be removed from all positions of power and influence if Europe is to survive. ◁

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Fictional Muslims, Nonfictional Muslims

The Flying Inn Revisited

by Derek Turner

Melanie Anderson

Ninety-two years ago, at the apex of England's Edwardian ease, Gilbert Keith Chesterton published a curious little novel, written in his inimitable light-but-serious style. In the context of a literary ambience that had recently produced *The Wind in the Willows* and *Peter Pan*, *The Flying Inn* must have seemed like just another piece of whimsy, from an author already noted for whimsical productions (albeit ones espousing a traditionalist manifesto). Only now can we view this book in its proper light, and only now can we appreciate Chesterton's keen insights into the meaning of modernity.

For those unfamiliar, *The Flying Inn* is a story of how Islam creeps up on an unsuspecting England and its rapid progress from fringe nuttiness to the highest offices of state.

In the first chapter, an old man in a battered fez is regaling indifferent passers-by with the ridiculous theory that English culture is really distorted Islamic culture—"proved," he says, by the English habit of eating turkey for Christmas. Just a few weeks later, he is wearing rather better clothes and addressing Ethical Societies; a few weeks more, and he is a respected guest at all the fashionable parties.

And so it goes, until leading politician Lord Ivywood, who is temperamentally drawn to Islam because of its puritanism and extreme abstraction (to the point of inhumanity), ushers in an un-English England of abstemiousness, humorlessness, cross-crescent hybrid symbols on the dome of St. Paul's, and fez-wearing policemen enforcing brand-new restrictions on ancient liberties. The Flying Inn has become a banned, peripatetic public house, literally run by an English Tory publican, Humphrey Pump, and a hotheaded Irish adventurer, Patrick Dalroy (whom we first meet as an anti-Turk freedom fighter in Greece). They race around the country with the old pub sign and a barrel of rum, defying the authorities, defying joylessness, and keeping alive the spirit (and spirits) of England.

Eventually, Pump and Dalroy, leading an impromptu army of patriots, defeat a Turkish army that has been smuggled into the country with the connivance of the by-now-insane Lord Ivywood: "There, encamped in English meadows, with a hawthorn-tree in front of them and three beeches behind, was that something that had never been in camp nearer than some leagues south of Paris, since that Carolus called the Hammer broke it backwards at Tours." After the battle, the English pub is restored to its rightful place in the physical and emotional landscape, Ivywood is under medical care, and Islam is again relegated to the status of safely distant artifact.

Chesterton has his stylistic faults, including cardboard-cut-out characters, a fondness for sermonizing, and a sophistical delight in placing paradoxes on top of paradoxes. He also has a gusto for life (he and his comrade Hilaire Belloc were renowned for their gourmandism and the gales of laughter that they almost constantly emitted), a deep love of England and of Christendom, an enviable ability to evoke places and moods and encapsulate complex worldviews, congenial political views, and considerable insight into human nature. The great strengths of *The Flying Inn*—and the reasons why it repays study today—are its masterly evocation of English topography and character; Chesterton's impressions of the differences between Europe and Asia ("We dress the characters and they paint the scenery"); and his analysis of the ways in which militant ideologies can exploit weakness and the strange connections that can exist between seeming opposites, such as Dalroy and the Turkish tyrant Oman Pasha, powerful and flamboyant warriors for their respective faiths who are prepared to battle to the death, yet have a chivalrous regard for each other. "I hope we shall meet again in the only life that is a good life," says Oman Pasha to Dalroy—a reference to a much more interesting and colorful universe beyond the mundane, carpetbagging present.

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Dalroy (and Chesterton) would have sided instinctively with the boatswain of *The Three Half Moons*, who, in 1563, found his ship with its 38-man crew attacked by eight Turkish slaving galleys off Gibraltar, who "fared among the Turks like a wood lion. For there was none of them that either could or durst stand in his face" until finally he died, exhorting his shipmates "to win praise by death rather than to live captives in misery and shame" (Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Explorations and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 1589). They would also have admired his even more remarkable shipmate, John Foxe of Woodbridge, who, although finally overwhelmed after desperate resistance, led 258 Christian slaves of different denominations in a daring escape from Alexandria after 14 years in bondage, a unique "exercise in oecumenical militancy" (Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, 1977).

In *The Flying Inn*, the bland fashions of vegetarianism, teetotalism, spiritualism, scientism, pacifism, relativism, and the official orthodoxies of progress and reasonableness mask darker realities. The German doctor who advocates drinking special milk for a longer life is a grasping scoundrel who waters down and sells normal milk at a premium. The successful chemist who pedals tonics in the officially alcohol-free United Kingdom is a bootlegger to the rich. The European negotiators (including Ivywood) who strive to bring peace to Greece at all costs are consigning captured Christian girls to lifelong service in seraglios and restive Greek workers to unemployment and *dhimmitude*. The gorgeous Islamic art with which Ivywood decorates his house is lifelessly anti-Western. The crackpot with his seemingly harmless theories about turkeys is reasoning Christians out of their religion, ably assisted by addlepated aristocrats and editorialists.

All these phenomena are fundamentally similar and connected, and all are effectively paving the way for the arrival of the battle-hardened forces of Oman Pasha—after whose victory, one can foresee, the useful idiots will no longer be quite so useful. Such "harmless" tendencies constitute a death of a thousand cuts, a draining away of the lifeblood from one tiny painless wound after another. Eventually, after the ministrations of Ivywood and many lesser leeches, all England is ready to be knocked down and conquered—as France was later trampled underfoot by Raspail's "herd of stampeding lambs."

In 1914, the notion that England might someday be Islamic would understandably have been laughed to scorn. Although this prospect is still far-fetched, it is much less so today, with serious authors anxiously looking forward to a "Eurabia" that will encompass all or most of the Christian heartlands.

According to the 2001 census, Britain's Muslim minority numbered 1,546,626 (around 2.5 percent of the population), but it is a population with a markedly higher birthrate (although the latest figures show a slight tailing-off). It is often impoverished (33 percent of Muslim households with dependent children had no working adult in 2001); relatively undereducated; and alienated by religion, social attitudes, and poor language skills. However, an estimated 11 percent of British-based Muslims describe themselves as "white," according to figures released in October by the office of National Statistics; these converts include aristocrats and other influential people. Some of them must be near equivalents of Lord Ivywood.

The most obvious near-equivalent is our forever-departing yet still sadly present prime minister. Some Muslims say that Tony Blair is "Islamophobic," because of his actions toward Iraq and Afghanistan. However, his three administrations have encouraged massive immigration and multiculturalism. He has pushed through laws to criminalize criticism of Islam. (One present target is British National Party leader Nick Griffin, who is awaiting a second trial on charges of having called Islam "a vicious, wicked faith." Quite coincidentally, his party is making electoral inroads in formerly solid Labour areas.) The great statesman has also shown a wooden-headed determination to admit Turkey into the European Union, even though it would increase the E.U. Muslim population from around 5 percent to around 15 percent overnight. The allegedly "Christian" prime minister talks reverentially about the Koran and sees Islam as a "religion of peace" that has been "hijacked by extremists." Over the years since 1997, giveaway statements from his senior colleagues have shown just where their—and his—sympathies lie. For example, then-foreign secretary Jack Straw, speaking in 2005 in support of Turkey's bid for E.U. membership, referred to "the boundary between so-called Christian heritage states and those of Islamic heritage." Rarely has "so-called" signified so much. One can imagine Straw or Blair welcoming, with Ivywood, "the breaking of barriers" and rejoicing that "beyond that I see nothing."

Similar attitudes percolate throughout society, right down to those at the sharp end of public order. Centuries ago, in 1989, the police declined to take action against the thousands who filled Parliament Square to demand the death of Salman Rushdie. Unmasterly inactivity is still the name of their game. This past February, they declined to take action against anti-Danish protestors who called for the beheading of nonbelievers. In October, they dropped charges against an antipapal demonstrator outside Westminster Cathedral, who had threatened that those who "insult Islam" would be "subject to capital punishment." The demonstrators' placards, which bore legends such as "Pope go to hell" and "May Allah curse the Pope," were curiously not regarded as incitements to religious hatred. One wonders how they would have responded to placards reading "Muhammad go to hell." The police were deaf to the views of Tory MP David Davies (not to be confused with David Davis, shadow home secretary), who said, "It sends out a message to Muslim extremists across the world that we, as a country, do not have the moral courage to stand up to them. They are likely to become more and more outspoken because it is apparent that we do not have the courage to stand up to them."

In Preston in September, a four-hour race riot involving hundreds of Muslims, during which a teenager was stabbed, was described by Lancashire Police as "community tension" and "no major incident"—which casts an interesting light on Preston's nightlife and gives a new dimension to the notion of British phlegm. In October, a Muslim officer with the Metropolitan Police was excused from duty outside the Israeli embassy in London because he disagreed with Israeli policy in Lebanon. He was supported by the Muslim Police Officers Association (yes), although even they admitted that police officers should not "pick and choose" assignments.

One can understand why policemen concerned about social stability are so reluctant to take controversial actions or to downplay inflammatory incidents. After all, they will be the first victims of any serious unrest, just as their colleagues are in France—2,500 of them having been injured by Muslims this year, in what is being described as an "*intifada*." Unfortunately, *angst*-fueled placation is not the sole preserve of the

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police. One thinks of the Birmingham teacher who, despite having interrupted a carol-concert rehearsal to bellow, "Why are you saying Jesus and Jesus Christ? God is not your god—it is Allah!" was shortly afterward promoted to school inspector. No doubt he will be a strong supporter of the National Curriculum's requirement for "broadly Christian" acts of worship during school assemblies. Even in prisons, where one might have thought common sense would be, well, common, Muslim inmates are permitted to receive such literary masterpieces as *Spectacle of Death*, glorifying *jihad*, and *Islam on Homosexuality*, advocating stoning for homosexuals. A paratrooper in a Birmingham hospital recovering from wounds suffered in Afghanistan was harangued by a hectoring visitor who shouted, "You have been killing my Muslim brothers!" One could multiply such examples almost indefinitely.

There is no succor higher up the social scale. The Prince of Wales is a sponsor of a major Islamic art collection in South Kensington and has an "Islamic Garden" at his Gloucestershire home. This is no mere plaything, like George IV's "Hindoo" Brighton Pavilion, but is clearly a symbol of his expressed wish not to be "Defender of the Faith," as his Coronation Oath will one day require of him, but a "defender of faiths." Meanwhile, his mother has long since given up the unequal struggle to be true to her Oath, sworn so touchingly and clearly whilst wearing Norman Hartnell and bearing the regalia of England, in that Westminster Abbey of a million years ago. Her sense of defeat has most recently manifested itself in her decision to permit a part-time employee at Windsor Castle to have a special prayer room there during Ramadan. Nagina Chaudhry commented, "It feels amazing to be the first Muslim to read *namaz* [prayers] at Windsor Castle . . . I was reciting the prayer with more power than usual because I knew I was making history." Meanwhile, just down the road, history of a less rarefied kind was also made in October, as a Muslim dairy became the epicenter of three nights of violence, including petrol bombing, when a dispute over a planned Islamic cultural center morphed into a minor race riot.

The simple fact is that virtually all of today's political and opinion-forming classes would rather caress Islam than confront it. Sentiments and actions that would be condemned were they to emanate from almost any other religious tradition are mysteriously acceptable (if perhaps a little gauche) when uttered by Muslims. London Mayor Ken Livingstone, whose name is synonymous with politically correct idiocy, was pleased to receive Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a supporter of Hezbollah and enthusiast for clitoridectomy, who has said that "Everything will be on our side and against Jews on [Judgment Day] . . . at that time, even the stones and the trees will speak, with or without words, and say: 'Oh servant of Allah, oh Muslim, there's a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'" It is difficult to imagine Livingstone sharing a platform with a Christian pastor or a rabbi who had expressed himself in similarly vigorous terms.

The key difference, so far as the likes of Livingstone are concerned, is that Muslims are world-historical victims of "racism" and "imperialism," old and new, from General Gordon to George W. Bush; besides which, the Muslim vote has become electorally important in many of Britain's large conurbations. In Livingstone's mind, a twisted morality based on historical ignorance has become conflated with a mean hunger to be reelected, and maybe even a fear for his personal safety. He clearly has lower expectations of Muslims than of members of other groups: It could plausibly be argued that these lower expectations are actually evidence of an unconfessed "racism" on his part.

Similar factors and considerations meet and meld in the minds of too many Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians—and now seem to be making themselves felt in David Cameron's Blue Labour. All of these politicians are salesmen rather than statesmen, adjusting to what they see as reality rather than seeking to change that reality. Their collective view of those who dare to protest against what French philosopher Robert Redeker has called the "Islamization of spirits" is that they are naive embarrassments who really should just keep quiet for their own—and our—sakes. The sad truth is that politicians and journalists who prattle about the alleged tolerance of, for example, the Moors in Andalusia have a deep psychological need to believe such stories, because the implications of their not being true are far too awful for them to contemplate.

Politicians and journalists who prattle about the alleged tolerance of the Moors in Andalusia have a deep psychological need to believe such stories.

It is perilously easy to reason ourselves into despair. But across Europe, if there are reasons for despondency, there are also grounds for hope, as the actions of the interlopers spark a Newtonian reaction. In October, Turkish industrialist Omer Sabanc complained that the cartoons crisis, terrorism, and integration problems with Muslims had "unleashed some old devils in Europe" and that "extremists have started setting the agenda."

Here in England, the London bombs of last year and the continued local electoral successes of the British National Party have elicited even from Blair and the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality denunciations of multiculturalism, as well as concerns about the social impact of immigration (not that they are actually *doing* anything yet). Senior appeasers such as Jack Straw have now become the targets of the ingrates they have nursed, with Straw being accused of racism in October for asking female Muslim constituents to unveil when visiting his office. Meanwhile, many within the British media have begun to write articles that, just a few short years ago, would have been confined to *Right Now!* or the *Salisbury Review*. Respected analysts such as Rear Adm. Chris Parry are speaking openly of a possible dystopic near-future of uncontrolled immigration and negative assimilation, with ethnic groups importing Third World habits and terrorism on an unprecedented scale—and attracting curiously little opprobrium, as some even on the left begin to consider the awfulness of what has for so long been stirring in the shadows.

In the best traditions of fairy tales, *The Flying Inn* ends happily, with "a world made fresh and warm again." It is still much too early to say whether Britain's nonfictional foray into the fantastical will end equally satisfactorily. ◁

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Holding a New Line

Pope Benedict, Islam, and the Media

by Alberto Carosa

At the time of his election to the papacy, many thought that Pope Benedict XVI's approach toward Islam would be, by and large, no different from that of his predecessor, the late John Paul II. But Benedict's now-famous speech at the University of Regensburg and the ensuing reactions in the Islamic world have shown that this will not be the case, for the very simple reason that John Paul II seemed incapable of quoting anything that would so clearly expose what many (including Srdja Trifkovic and Robert Spencer) have described as the real nature of Islam. Subsequently, Benedict apologized for having unintentionally and unwittingly offended the "sensitiveness of Muslim faithful," adding that the quotation did not reflect his opinion and that his speech "in its totality was and is an invitation to frank and sincere dialogue, with mutual respect."

For those unfamiliar with the details, in a lecture to 1,500 university professors and students in Regensburg on September 12, Benedict cited Manuel II Paleologus (Byzantine emperor from 1391 to 1425), who, in a dialogue with a Persian Muslim, said, "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

Some Muslim leaders believed that Benedict's apology was sufficient to defuse the row; others thought it did not go far enough. None of them answered the basic question: Was the emperor cited by the Pope telling the truth? Moreover, how could Benedict retract words that were not his own?

The Regensburg speech shows a primary difference of approach between John Paul and Benedict. While the former's pastoral action was heavily influenced by his emotional and charismatic temper, the latter is a theologian by formation, a man given to making principled arguments and drawing logical conclusions. Some might think that this is just my personal opinion, so let us turn to facts and apply the good old Latin dictum *contra factum non valet argumentum* (arguments don't hold against facts).

On May 14, 1999, at the Vatican, John Paul was presented with a copy of the Koran as a gift. First, he bowed as "a sign of respect," and, when the book was placed into his hands, he kissed it. Besides being the first pope to kiss the Koran and the first ever to enter a mosque, John Paul encouraged dialogue between the two faiths, in particular with visits to Muslim-dominated Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. He also ignored criticism from Israel and international Jewish groups and agreed to meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Jordan's King Abdullah.

Small wonder, then, that leading Muslim theologian Mohammed Amine Smaili, a professor of Islamic dogma at the University of Rabat in Morocco, hailed John Paul II as "the light of inter-religious dialogue" at the recent international meeting of world religions in Assisi. Such accolades are unlikely to be applied to Pope Benedict in the foreseeable future, given his more cautious approach. In fact, in the Regensburg speech, the Holy Father indicates that the differences between Islamic and Christian concepts of God make dialogue difficult—not impossible, *per se*, but difficult—because the way we understand God's nature has everything to do with how we interpret reality and the duty we owe Him. This point, according to some commentators, was often downplayed by Benedict's predecessor.

Benedict is not a darling of the media, given his unwillingness to use politically (or, better, "Koranically") correct language. When Cardinal Ratzinger headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he was already noted for his conservative stances with regard to religious pluralism and liberation theology, and, once you are labeled *conservative*, you remain conservative for the rest of your life—in the eyes of the media, at least.

Therefore, from the early stages of his pontificate, the media have sought to continue depicting him as a conservative, especially since dialogue with Muslims clearly was not one of his priorities, as his books and speeches were primarily focused on the need to support the Christian West. His stated belief that Europe is having an identity crisis was seen in his opposition to Turkey joining the European Union and in his removal of Archbishop Michael Louis Fitzgerald, a pioneer of Islamic-Christian dialogue, from his position as head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Benedict is also folding the council into the Pontifical Council for Culture. Egyptian Jesuit Samir Khalil Samir described this shift in emphasis from religious dialogue to cultural engagement as a reflection of Benedict's desire to concentrate on the concrete aspects of culture and human rights.

Thus, the impression is that Benedict is emphasizing reciprocity and religious freedom more often and with a greater vigor than his predecessor. For example, when he met with Ali Achour, Morocco's new ambassador to the Holy See, Benedict stressed the importance of respect and consideration for the religious beliefs and practices of different peoples. Peace can only be assured, in Benedict's words, by "respect for the religious convictions and practices of others, in a reciprocal way in all societies." Senior prelates are toeing the new line. "If we tell our people they have no right to offend, we have to tell the others they have no right to destroy us," said Angelo Cardinal Sodano, who was the Vatican's secretary of state during the Danish-cartoons row. "We must always stress our demand for reciprocity in political contacts with authorities in Islamic countries and, even more, in cultural contacts," Foreign Minister Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo told *Corriere della Sera*.

Alberto Carosa is an independent journalist who writes from Rome.

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Allowing Christian minorities the same rights that Muslims generally enjoy in Western countries—building houses of worship, practicing their religion freely—appears to be the heart of current Vatican diplomatic efforts toward Muslim states.

Before offering one of his weekly Angelus prayers in St. Peter's Square, Benedict expressed his solidarity with persecuted Christians around the world as Afghanistan's Abdul Rahman was facing a possible death sentence for having converted from Islam to Christianity 16 years ago. In a letter to Afghanistan's president Hamid Karzai, Cardinal Sodano, in Benedict's name, asked for the case to be dropped. The parish priest of Kabul, Msgr. Giuseppe Moretti, who celebrates Mass in a small chapel in the Italian embassy, told *Il Giornale* that this letter played a crucial part in Abdul Rahman's release. After being freed, he was transferred under protective custody to Italy, where he manifested his heartfelt gratitude to the Holy Father.

Regrettably, despite Benedict's plea for clemency, a similar result was not achieved in the case of three Indonesian Catholics who were executed on September 22, 2006, for allegedly masterminding a massacre of Muslims. Fabianus Tibo, Marinus Riwu, and Dominggus da Silva were convicted of organizing an assault on Muslims during the months of religious violence that caused 2,000 deaths in the Indonesian province of Sulawesi. Both Church officials and human-rights activists had denounced their trial, noting that the defendants were not allowed to present exculpatory evidence. Moreover, the proceedings took place under heavy pressure from Islamic radicals, and no Muslim has been convicted in connection with the religious clashes in Sulawesi. Prison officials even refused to grant a priest's request to be allowed to hear the men's confessions and celebrate a final Mass with them.

Former Spanish premier José María Aznar spoke openly of a double standard in relations between Islam and the West. During a speech at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C., he asked: "What is the reason . . . we, the West, always should be apologiz[ing] and they never should . . . apologize?" "It's absurd! They occupied Spain for eight centuries!"

The president of the German Bishops' Conference, Karl Cardinal Lehman, bashed the media for its double standard regarding Christianity and Islam. "At times one has the impression that artists, journalists and intellectuals, who have no qualms over confronting Christianity and don't shy away from ridiculing it, treat Islam with much care and even trepidation," he told the weekly *Focus*. "Mutual tolerance is the necessary foundation of a society that is proud of its freedom of expression in the arts and in the media."

The Western media's one-sided reportage on Benedict's Regensburg speech poured petrol on the Muslim fire and only served to hinder the Pope's humanitarian efforts. The violent reactions throughout the Islamic world, in Europe, and in America, with churches torched in the Holy Land, an Italian nun shot and killed in Somalia (though the shooting was reported as not being unequivocally related to the Pope's words), and death threats to the Pope and Christians were the direct consequences of the Western media's pro-Muslim, anti-Catholic bias. This, in turn, gave Al Jazeera the spark it needed to set alight the Muslim world. In particular, the *New York Times* appeared to be in the forefront of this offensive, making good use of criticisms leveled by emissaries of the liberal-progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, in particular certain well-known Italian *Vaticanisti* (journalists specializing in Vatican affairs). In the Vatican itself, an anonymous monsignor told *Inside the Vatican* that, "Under John Paul II, this would not have happened."

These powerful liberal-progressive sectors of the Church act as a Fifth Column in the West, playing into the hands of her mortal enemies—the Islamic forces, such as Al Qaeda, who have not minced words in declaring, "We will smash the cross," and, "Prophet Mohammed promised Muslims they would conquer Rome as they conquered Constantinople." For his part, the day after the Regensburg speech, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated that Islam "is the best religion for humanity," to which senior theologian Msgr. Nicola Bux replied that, if "he really thinks so, then he should accept a debate on various issues, for example on the idea of man, woman, liberty, participation in society etc, to assess whether it's actually so. This comparison will tell us which is the best, since, as aptly said by the Pope, faith must always relate itself to reason."

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An assistant professor of international relations from Koc University in Istanbul wrote, in a letter to the editor published in the *Economist* (October 7, 2006), that the Pope "seemed to be saying that one religion in particular (guess which one) sits well with reason, while others, such as Islam, do not." Such an argument is untenable, the academic argued, "because, among other things, Muslims were the first to learn from and build on Greek philosophy before passing the learning on to Europe during the Middle Ages." It seems that, in this age of complete historical ignorance, such statements go unchallenged and are accepted as fact. Apparently, those who have always believed, as Pope Benedict stated at Regensburg, that a "critically purified Greek heritage" formed "an integral part of Christian faith" are sorely mistaken.

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Time to Talk Turkey

Why We Must Say No

by Christie Davies

Turkey is currently negotiating to join the European Union, with the full support of the British government and of U.S. President George W. Bush. If she does join, it will be a disaster for Europe and for Britain. Turkey has 70 million people, nearly all of whom are Muslims and, by European standards, poor. She has a young population and a higher birthrate than any European country. If admitted, Turkey will soon have a larger population than any other country in the European Union.

To put it bluntly, we do not want a Muslim country in Europe, one that cannot share in the common Christian history, traditions, and culture that created Europe and still, to some extent, distinguish her. Muslim countries have not experienced the Enlightenment, that other shaping force of a distinctive European culture. Currently, European countries tolerate the beliefs of individual Muslims who are their citizens. Would such toleration survive a large new influx of several million Muslim Turks at a time of enhanced, aggressive bigotry on the part of Muslims? The Danish-cartoons episode shows that Muslims already living in Europe are prepared to call in assistance from outside to undermine European freedom of speech. Furthermore, fearful and politically correct European governments and courts are willing to suppress criticism of Islam and Muslim communities. In Belgium, such criticism can lead to criminal charges, and proving that what you have said is true is no defense. In February 2006, similar legislation supported by the Labour government designed to curry favor in Muslim-dominated constituencies was rejected by the British House of Commons by a mere ten votes.

Muslims hardly need new legal protection in European societies, given the present level of Islamic aggression. A British theater producer was forced to cut a production of Christopher Marlowe's play *Tamburlane*; it is impossible to put on Mozart's *Idomeneo* in Germany for fear of Muslim violence. We Europeans are no longer free to enjoy our own cultural traditions on our own Continent.

Worst of all, the radicalization of Muslim populations in Europe has led to terrorist murders in Britain and Spain and to the plotting of violence in Germany and Denmark. Simply stated, the more Muslims there are, the more violence there will be, for, even though most of them want to lead a quiet life built around work, family, and private piety, the number of Muslims committed to *jihad* will grow faster, and they will find it easier to operate if the overall Muslim populations are larger. Islamic terrorists can move among these people as a fish swims in the sea. If Turkey joins the European Union and there is a substantial movement of poor Muslims into Western Europe from Anatolia, it will cause a disastrous rise in the Muslim population of every major city, including cities already overcrowded with Muslims. After Poland joined the European Union, half-a-million to a million Poles emigrated to Britain and the Republic of Ireland. We may assume that, upon Turkey's accession, Turks would arrive in even greater numbers in Britain and Ireland. Should Turkey join the European Union, it is not the children of secular, educated, middle-class Turks with small families who will flood into Europe but those of fast-breeding peasants trapped in an alien Muslim cast of mind. We do not want them under any circumstances.

The party line is either the big lie that the Muslims already here do not constitute a problem or the medium-sized lie that the Turks are different from other Muslims. This latter lie stems from the claim that the great Turkish statesman, Kemal Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey, completely emancipated his country from Muslim backwardness and created a secular and national republic in place of the old Ottoman caliphate, which claimed lordship over the entire Muslim world. Atatürk did not succeed in the end, however, as, in the last half of the 20th century, the old Muslim ways came creeping back. Today, Islamic sentiment in Turkey is advancing fiercely. Consider the angry hysteria in Turkey from all her political parties following Pope Benedict's quotation of the 14th-century Byzantine emperor Manuel II during his wide-ranging academic lecture about religion, reason, and violence at the University of Regensburg in September. Salih Kapusuz, deputy leader of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, declared that "Benedict is going down in history in the same category as leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini." Before opening his mouth to insult the Holy Father in this way, Kapusuz should have reflected that the mass murder of the Christian Armenians in Muslim Ottoman Turkey had its own impact on Hitler; but, of course, it is a criminal offense to mention the Armenian holocaust in Turkey. At least the European Union and Turkey are moving in the same direction when it comes to censorship, though it might be added in passing that the new Turkish translation of *Mein Kampf* is a best-seller.

A colleague of mine in Stuttgart, a man of markedly internationalist and pacifist views, told me recently that the only group that is failing to integrate in his city is the Turks. The descendants of immigrants from Italy and from the former Yugoslavia had become part of the city, but the Turks segregate themselves—to such an extent, in fact, that they are creating a new dialect of German. What happens if these Turkish communities in Germany become radicalized? It has already happened to many South Asian Muslims in Britain as a result of a perverse self-segregation and their exchange of their older attachments to their place of origin for an Islamic identity. Will the Turks be next?

Why are Tony Blair and his Labour government, with the

Dr. Christie Davies is the author of The Strange Death of Moral Britain.

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support of many Conservatives, trying to inflict this disaster on the British people? Simply stated, George W. Bush wants it, and Mr. Blair does what he is told. Blair is what British Indians call a *chumcha* (a spoon), a mere instrument used to scoop up whatever its holder wants. President Bush is rightly fearful that Turkey could be absorbed into the general Islamic militancy of the Middle East, but his delusion is that, if Turkey joins Europe, she will be detached from the Middle East and suddenly become Western. She will not; she will merely bring the turmoil and bigotry of the Middle East into the heart of Europe. In any case, why should Europeans sacrifice their societies and identities to President Bush's foreign policy? Even more absurd is Bush's naive belief in democracy and his attempt to use the European Union as a way of shoring it up in Turkey. Democracy, in Turkey as in many other Muslim countries, is going to be the route by which the more fervent Muslims will take over completely. It is through democratically elected governments that Atatürk's republican legacy has been, is being, and will continue to be undermined.

In addition to his desire to please President Bush, Blair wants an ever bigger, ever more diverse Europe. Practically speaking, this would thwart French plans for E.U. centralization by making them impossible to implement, which is a much easier route for Blair, who lacks the courage to oppose further losses in national sovereignty to the European Commission directly and flatly. Moreover, Blair, like most European leaders, is afraid of giving the impression that he is xenophobic or that he sees himself as a member of an exclusive club. Those countries who opposed allowing Turkey even to apply for E.U. membership—Austria, Greece, and Cyprus—have been firmly told to shut up and fall in line. This must be particularly galling for the Greeks and the Cypriots, as it will be for the next new E.U. members, Rumania and Bulgaria, who retain a postcolonial resentment of an imperial rule that they still call the "Turkish yoke."

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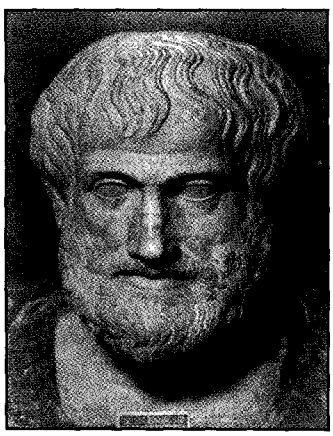
Turkey cannot be left out in the cold. It is time to start thinking about how to deal kindly with the Turks after their application has been rejected. In particular, it will be necessary for both Europeans and Americans to invest in manufacturing and tourism in Turkey and to give Turkish goods, including agricultural produce, full access to the European and American markets. Yet Turkey will still have to face the creeping Islamicization that is undermining Atatürk's achievement. A secular and nationalistic Turkish army may well decide to take control of the country in order to reverse this. What will the European Commission and George W. Bush do then? ©



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by Srdja Trifkovic

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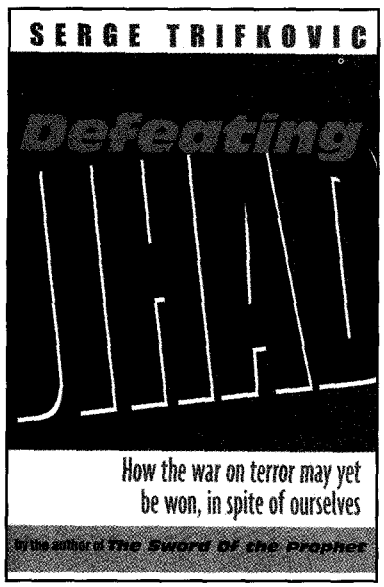
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War of the Worlds

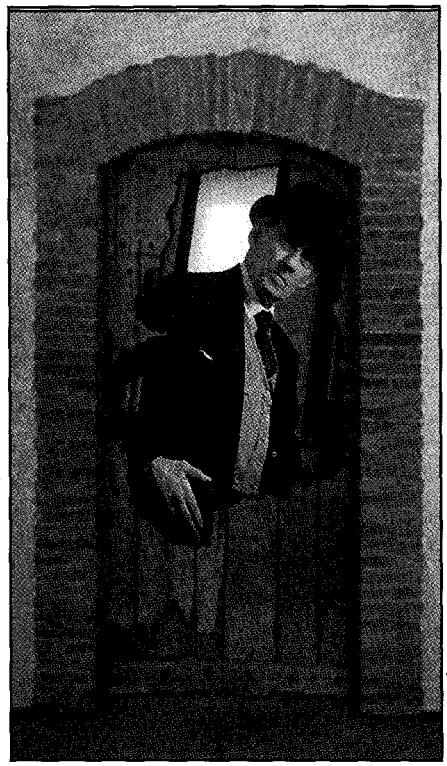
by Jack Trotter

"The most serious parody I have ever heard was this: In the beginning was nonsense, and the nonsense was with God, and the nonsense was God."
—Friedrich Nietzsche

My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority
by Philip Rieff
Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press; 234 pp., $34.95

◆

Philip Rieff is best known for his *Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (1966), a work that many would rank among the most significant intellectual achievements of the turbulent 1960's. *Triumph* was among the first to limn the emergence of the "therapeutic culture" in the post-Christian civilization of the West and was certainly the most penetrating in its understanding of just how radical a break with the past was implied by such a culture. To be sure, Rieff paired the terms *culture* and *therapeutic* with an acute sense of the culture-dissolving properties of the emergent therapeutic regime. For Rieff was conservative enough to recognize that a culture, in the deepest sense of the term, is a system of moral demands or symbols that makes "men intelligible and trustworthy to one another," while, at the same time, organizing "the expressive remissions by which men release themselves . . . from the strain of conforming to the controlling symbolic." By contrast, the therapeutic, or psychologizing, impulse in modern societies seeks the complete dissolution



Melanie Anderson

of inherited systems of moral demands.

What is most revolutionary about the world that Freud begot (though this was not at all his intention), argued Rieff, is the shift from "renunciatory control" toward a "predicate of impulse release." To the extent that the new therapeutic culture is itself a system of control, it is one founded precariously upon an "infinite variety of wants raised to the status of needs" (a rubric that might encompass not only the mephitic illusions of the advertising industry but also much of what passes for the political these days). But Rieff concedes that such a state of affairs would constitute not a "culture" so much as an "anti-culture," for with the overthrowing of the systems of renunciation, the sense of binding communal purpose that lies at the heart of traditional culture would be lost—replaced with an "ethic" of endless self-gratification.

In spite of this recognition, Rieff maintained an air of studied neutrality in *Triumph*. While he repeatedly noted that history offers no precedent for a civilization bereft of a proscriptive system of moral demands, he nonetheless held out the possibility that the emerging therapeutic culture might formulate its own more stable controls, that rampant narcissism might somehow be "managed" by psychiatric intervention "enhanced and perfected" at every level of the social organism. The old orders of faith and sacrifice may have been viable only in the now passing age of economic scarcity (all of human history before the 20th century). With the advent of the "affluent society," in which scarcity is no longer an overriding concern, men and women "may feel freer to live their lives with a minimum of pretense to anything more grand than sweetening the time." Perhaps, Rieff added, "it is better so; in cultures past, men sacrificed themselves to heroic and cruel deceptions, and suffered for glories that once mirrored their miseries."

In retrospect, it is hard to fathom how Rieff, who was otherwise so immune to the utopian drift of the 60's, could have failed to recognize the Orwellian implications of such speculations. Whatever the cause of this partial blindness, to reread *Triumph* today is to be otherwise astonished at its prescience. As a small industry of studies inspired by Rieff's work has testified, the therapeutic culture, or anticulture, has permeated virtually every aspect of our lives: the classroom, the criminal-justice system, vast sectors of our state and federal bureaucracies, the

Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

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churches, the arts, the entertainment industry, advertising, sexual relations, and child rearing—just to name the most obvious. Even more ominously, it has seeped into our very thoughts, encouraging us at every turn to conceive of ourselves as patients rather than agents, as isolated and needy selves whose "actualization" depends on the caring intervention of an army of "experts" eager to absolve us of our moral scruples and to render us thereby more dependent on their tender mercies. Considered as a pseudoreligion, what some have called *therapism* has proved vastly more effective in shaping the consciousness of the masses than were the failed totalitarian ideologies of communism and fascism—and may be more enduring.

But there lies the rub. Can such an anticulture be sustained? After almost 40 years of near silence on the matter, Rieff raises the question persistently in *My Life Among the Deathworks*, the first of three volumes under the general heading *Sacred Order/Social Order*. Here, the term *therapeutic*, while still an important analytical motif, has become part of a more comprehensive polemic against the anticulture that now dominates the most affluent societies and threatens to become global in its reach. The transformation in Rieff's intellectual posture is astonishing. Abandoned is the "fiction" of scientific neutrality maintained in his earlier work; the voice with which he now speaks is, by turns, angry, coruscating, contemptuous, darkly ironic, riddling, and, above all, prophetic. He has taken a side, and there is no ambiguity about which side. By his own admission, *Deathworks* is an attempt to strike a "fatal blow" against the anticulture and its "armies," those whose ultimate aim is the destruction of the very memory of the sacred orders that undergirded every culture before the nightmarish "dispossession" of the last century. Against the sociological tradition established by Saint-Simon and Comte, Rieff offers a "sacred sociology" that (he argues in a footnote) may be said to have its origins in Plato's *Republic* and the Pentateuch. To reclaim this "minority tradition" is, first of all, to recover the revelation of divine identity in Exodus 3:14 ("I AM THAT I AM"), the foundation of all genuine identity, of that "sacred self" of which the anticulture is busily stripping us.

Deathworks articulates a conceptual schema that is at once chronological and synchronistic. Rieff posits a "war of the worlds" that is, at one level, clearly parodic. The first world in this schema is the pagan world, encompassing both the complex rationality of ancient Athens and the "enchanted mysticisms of aboriginal Australia." However different, both are sacred orders rooted in a "mythical understanding of Nature, its gods myriad and its power primordial, capricious, and overwhelming." Rieff's second world encompasses the cultures rooted in the commanding monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, sacred orders predicated upon revelation, faith, and credal obedience. Common to both the first and the second worlds is the vertical in authority (which Rieff, fond of his wordplay, designates the "via"). Every culture that came before the present, he notes, "has been a form of address to some ultimate authority." By contrast, the now dominant "third world" aspires to address no authority higher than the desacralized self, eliminating the vertical dimension shared by first and second worlds. This third world has its origin not, as its own dominant myth suggests, in some predetermined evolution of consciousness breaking free of the shackles of faith, but in negation pure and simple. The third world feeds, parasitically, on the truths of the first and second worlds, recycling them endlessly as fictions: "Third world anti-cultures consume their negational truths," Rieff notes, "as swiftly as they produce them."

Historically speaking, Rieff's first world of metadivine divinities, personifications of hidden, primordial power (a "fecund prepotence" from which all things have their birth) is long since dead. Its truths can no longer be inhabited (despite the pretensions of the New Age movement). Nonetheless, there is an underlying affinity between the first and second worlds. If the third world recognizes no via, it does recognize what Rieff calls primacies of possibility, powers or potencies akin to the mythical agencies of the first. The Freudian "death instinct" would be an early example of such a primacy of possibility; latterly, our third-world theorists conjure obsessively with the primacies of race, class, and "gender," the "god-terms" of the present age, which "abstract power into instruments of mind with which to manipulate matter no longer thought metadivine; indeed, no longer thought divine." Thus, the first world occupies a fictional place in the ongoing culture war of the worlds, though the central scene of struggle is between the dominant third and a resurgent second world which, though the hour is late, begins to awaken from its long slumber and to recognize that the enemy has overrun the very precincts of the temple.

Since James Davison Hunter popularized the notion in his 1991 book *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, third-world culture skeptics such as Alan Wolfe have attempted to argue that the contemporary *Kulturkampf* has been exaggerated or that it is simply a hoax perpetrated by the Religious Right in an attempt to rally its troops against imaginary enemies. Hunter, who wrote the Introduction to *Deathworks*, makes the timely point that the debunkers are "committed to denying or trivializing [the idea of the culture wars] by focusing attention exactly where the conflict is weakest—the attitudes and opinions of ordinary people." In other words, the culture wars are primarily a struggle between elites and the institutions that they control, and, most importantly, between the "competing sources of moral authority that animate them." Rieff would certainly agree, for he states repeatedly that third-world culture is an "invention" of what he calls "radically remissive elites." (The term *remissive* is borrowed from the Freudian vocabulary to describe transgressive acts against the via.) Strictly speaking, the elites of the third world possess no "source of moral authority," save the most ephemeral, which, by its very nature, must be constantly reinvented. Indeed, the deepest source of whatever authority they can muster lies in their ever-renewed claim (in a thousand guises) to be the licensed purveyors "of human freedom against the authority of the past." To this end, they have employed and dominated the powerful new technologies—electronic, digital, and, increasingly, medicinal—to extend their control over the masses. And, in this, they have been abetted by the seemingly innate resistance of the people themselves against the heroic (and tragic) renunciatory culture of the second world. Recalling Nietzsche's claim that Christianity is the Platonism of the people, Rieff suggests that

> "the people" have resisted and resented Christian faith the more as both science and sociology have promised them release from any and all theologies of truth tran-

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scending their immediate worlds and wishes as they would have them fulfilled in a waking dream of life mastered and themselves pleasured.

Perhaps this is, as some have suggested, to place too little faith in the moral instincts of ordinary men and women, but it is difficult to see much hard evidence to the contrary. Those instincts may be fundamentally sound, but they can all too easily be manipulated and channeled toward dubious ends.

In the army of the third-world elite, there are many divisions, but, increasingly, the spiritual authority of the old second-world priesthood has been transferred, not primarily to the technocrats or the professoriate of the "higher illiteracy," but to the artists. In Rieff's idiom, third-world artists are the masters of "decreation." As its subtitle ("Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority") implies, much of *Deathworks* is a meditation on the transgressive role of modern art, which, in its essence, seeks the negation of the vertical in authority. Thus, Rieff employs the term *deathwork* to refer primarily to works of third-world art, though specific events or actions (political actions, modes of pedagogy, *etc.*) may also be called deathworks. Auschwitz, for example, was a mighty deathwork intended not only to eliminate the Jews bodily but to strip them—the "carrier race" of the commanding truths out of Jerusalem—of their "sacred selves" through unspeakable degradation. All third-world aesthetics, properly read against the grain, reveal a similar appetite for degradation, mockery, and sacrilege. One could not begin to do justice here to the range and subtlety of Rieff's "readings" of specific works of art and literature, especially in Chapter Three ("Deathworks and Third World Creative Destructions"), which is without question the book's entrée. A mere sample, then, will have to suffice.

Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés* (*"Being Given"*), according to Rieff one of the greatest deathworks of the 20th century, was created secretly by the famous surrealist during the last two decades (1946-1966) of his life and, in fact, became known to the public only after his death. This "assemblage," permanently installed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, at first appears simply to be an ancient wooden door, framed, like the entrance to some medieval dungeon, in redbrick. However, as the viewer approaches the door, he discovers two peepholes conveniently placed in the middle of the door's upper half. The invitation to an act of voyeurism is thus made explicit, and what one sees through those peepholes is a calculated obscenity at once more shocking and far subtler than the barbaric photographic statements of Robert Mapplethorpe. Behind the door lies the eerily lit ruin of an Arcadian landscape—weeds growing rampant, as in a vacant lot; fragments of a stone wall that might once have formed a garden enclosure (perhaps a medieval *hortus conclusus*). Just to the left of center is sprawled the naked body of a woman, her genitalia exposed and presented in the fore, her head obscured by shadow. She appears to be a corpse that looks to be in an advanced state of *rigor mortis*, and yet her left arm upholds an illuminated gas lamp. Directly behind the lamp in the distance, a waterfall cascades. As might be expected, third-world connoisseurs of postmodern anti-art have lavishly praised Duchamp's assemblage as the apotheosis of the avant-garde attempt to "liberate" the art object from the traditional "picture plane" and, thus, to allow no fixed meaning to be assigned to the object by the viewer-voyeur. Refusing to be drawn by such evasions, Rieff brilliantly articulates what should be obvious to anyone whose understanding has not been subverted by the "higher illiteracy" of art criticism: Duchamp's "masterpiece" is a pornographic and unmitigated attack on the sacred origin of humanity, of man (or woman) made in the image of God. This degraded image of the "world woman" (primordial image of sexual fertility) is at once a mocking vision of the desecration of the temple of God (the body as the dwelling place of the soul) and a third-world vision of life "given" out of death. In so titling the work, Duchamp seems to be saying that "Being itself—the ontological condition—is transgressive in its energies," that the truest act of creation lies in destruction.

It is curious that Rieff fails to note the striking parallels between Duchamp's *Étant donnés* and the photographs of the mutilated body of Elizabeth Short, the so-called Black Dahlia, which were widely circulated in the American press in 1947-48, just as Duchamp had begun to model his assemblage. The Black Dahlia murder is, of course, one of the most notorious of unsolved homicides in American history (it has served as fodder for a recent Brian De Palma film), in part because of the "artful" manner in which Short's naked corpse was "assembled" on the edge of a weedy vacant lot in a Los Angeles neighborhood not far from where Duchamp's fellow artist and sometimes collaborator, photographer Man Ray, kept a studio. In fact, a growing body of evidence suggests that Duchamp (who was working then in New York, and who shared with his friend Ray a fascination for the transgressive "artistry" of killers such as the Marquis de Sade) was powerfully influenced by the photographs that were available to him in the New York papers, as well as by the details of Short's rather curious sexuality. If true, this convergence of art and criminality of the most debased sort only serves to confirm Rieff's assumption that our third-world artists have become (with few exceptions) the willing servants/savants of a culture of death. And what is more, they contemptuously invite our craven complicity in their murderous arts. For this, they are applauded by archpriests of the postmodern such as Jean-François Lyotard, who has written of *Étant donnés* that there is a trick of perspective in the work which suggests a certain equivalence between viewer and vulva: "Thus, when the peeping eyes think they're seeing the vulva, they're seeing themselves. . . . *Con celuit qui voit.*"

Philip Rieff died of heart failure on July 3 at his home in Philadelphia. He was 83 years old. The two remaining volumes of *Sacred Order/Social Order* were completed before his death and are forthcoming. Thus, it remains to be seen just how enduring a foundation Rieff has laid for his "sacred sociology." If the first volume is any indication, defenders of the beleaguered second world will be studying Rieff's work for some time to come. *Deathworks* is a difficult book, at times frustrating (probably deliberately so), often obscure, but just as often exhilarating in its clarity and sudden flashes of insight that illuminate the darker regions of our ongoing culture wars. Some reviewers have dismissed it as "gloomy" or deeply pessimistic, but this is simply not the case. While it is true that Rieff envisions what may be a long, twilight struggle between the elites of the second and third worlds, he seems convinced that the anticultures of the third world are "interims . . . that can never be made rational or enduring," for they are, in essence, "self consuming."

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Our Special Relationship

by Derek Turner

American Ally: Tony Blair and the War on Terror
by Con Coughlin
New York: Ecco; 400 pp., $26.95

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Con Coughlin is the defense and security editor of London's *Daily Telegraph* and the author of several books on Middle Eastern themes: *Hostage*, about Lebanon in the 1980's; *A Golden Basin Full of Scorpions: The Quest for Modern Jerusalem*, a presentation of the city through the voices of residents; and *Saddam: King of Terror*, a profile of Iraq's "indefatigable" erstwhile strongman.

American Ally, which was first published in the United States, is an attempt to dissect the superficially paradoxical relationship between the "conservative" George W. Bush and the "left-wing" Tony Blair. To this end, Coughlin has interviewed both men and many of their associates and aides and plowed through reams of largely indigestible books and documents searching for telling information. The result is as detailed a study as is likely to be available until the chief protagonists start publishing their memoirs, key official documents are declassified, and the many anonymous sources quoted by Coughlin identified.

Mr. Coughlin, whose father was also a *Telegraph* journalist, has a "hawkish" reputation. As he put it in a June 2003 article, he is "someone who has argued consistently in favour of taking military action to remove Saddam," this attitude being a *Telegraph* tradition. In 1995, Coughlin wrote a story about Safi Qaddafi, son of Libya's ill-famed colonel, repeating allegations that Qaddafi Junior was attempting to flood Iraq with counterfeit currency, for which the paper had to apologize and pay costs after it emerged that the story was MI6 black propaganda. In 2003, in the run-up to the American attack on Iraq, he lent credence to the infamous "45 minutes" claim. Shortly after the invasion, he was pleased to publicize the famous document "proving" that Muhammad Atta had visited Baghdad in the summer of 2001—which story vanished suddenly from the political radar after being exposed as a fake. In February 2005, Coughlin was hailing the "success" of the Iraq elections. By July 2006, he was saying that the Beirut authorities "have only themselves to blame" for the Israeli incursion (as if the weak Lebanese government could have done anything to shut down Hezbollah) and that Iran had engineered the Hezbollah abductions to distract attention from Tehran's stonewalling of nuclear inspectors. And in the same *Telegraph* article, he asserted that "the primary, almost sacred, duty of an Israeli prime minister is to defend the Jewish people by any means at his disposal" (although even such emotive language did not prevent him from being accused of "Israel-hatred" by one particularly excitable contributor to Stephen Pollard's website).

American Ally, by contrast, is unexpectedly objective and explains very fairly the rationales of those who argued against the war. There are even strongly worded criticisms of the neocons: "[S]o determined were the hawks to oust the Iraqi dictator from power that they were not prepared to let simple facts impede their prowar rhetoric." Coughlin includes a chapter entitled "How to Lose a War," which pulls no punches. (He blames poor prewar planning—British as well as American—and rivalry between the Pentagon and the State Department after the invasion.) And, in a change of mind since 2003, he concludes that both the 1998 and 2002 intelligence dossiers regarding WMDs "provided a misleading assessment of the threat Saddam posed to the outside world." Open-mindedness of this kind requires considerable courage.

Coughlin has the investigative journalist's gift for snuffling out significant turns of phrase or truffles of hard fact from amidst the moldering leaf-litter of the spin-doctors. He also turns a lucid phrase of his own, of help in making this rather depressing story of two rather tedious men with rather predictable views more compelling than it might otherwise have been.

On the other hand, this is a journalistic work that was clearly put together in a hurry. Nevertheless, *American Ally* has considerable value as a kind of executive summary of the major events and personalities behind the Iraq imbroglio. Those who wish to know the details of the "dodgy dossier," the interminable U.N. resolutions, internal Labour machinations, or the death of David Kelly will find Coughlin's summations very useful. The author provides keen insights into the real nature of New Labour, with its strange combination of sugary idealism and cynical manipulation of public opinion. A perfect example came with the 2002 intelligence dossier when, as Coughlin says damningly, "Blair's staff showed little interest in the technical details and were more concerned with the media coverage that the dossier's publication had generated."

Coughlin is excellent at setting out the complex background to apparently inexplicable policy decisions and reminding us of the countervailing pressures that can be brought to bear on such as Tony Blair. "In a conflict that looked set to last a generation or more, the ultimate verdict on the success, effectiveness and necessity of [Blair's and Bush's] alliance would be for future generations to decide." I shall also be eternally grateful to him for the anecdote about the Clinton advisor who turned to Blair just before a joint Clinton-Blair press conference and muttered, "You! Don't f--k this up!"

In 1995-96, at the time of his friendship with Bill Clinton, in those far-off days when John Major was still prime minister and no one had heard of a plump intern named Monica Lewinsky, "Blair knew nothing about foreign policy . . . We thought it was something we could sort out once he got elected," as one of Blair's aides expressed it to Coughlin. Blair went through a rapid learning process between late 1996 and early 1997 in preparation for the May 1 election that catapulted him into office and was, according to Coughlin, "particularly keen to learn about Britain's military capabilities and how they could best be deployed." He became inspired by Margaret Thatcher's determination to allow the Bosnian Muslims to be armed. Shortly after his election, he ordered a review of Britain's military strength and, a few weeks later, met Mrs. Thatcher for an hour's discussion. "She told him," recalled Charles Powell, Blair's chief of staff, "that it was the primary duty of a British prime minister to get on with a US president."

Blair set out his own "doctrine of the international community" in a speech to the Chicago Economic Club in April 1999. A respected British defense expert, Laurence Freedman, wrote most of the speech—a careful enumeration of five criteria for international intervention ("Are we sure of our case? Have all the diplomatic options been exhausted? Can the military operation be prudently

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undertaken? Is there a will to hold out for the long term if required? Are there national interests involved?") to which Blair "added his own moral dimension" while in the mid-Atlantic. This speech was aimed at justifying and deepening NATO actions in Kosovo but would later serve as Blair's justification for backing the "War on Terror." Blair favored war "not based on territorial ambition but on values." The "international community" could no longer regard "acts of genocide" as a "purely internal matter." (The Clinton administration's greater caution about Kosovo irritated Blair and may have predisposed him to like Clinton's successor.) The stage was set for an Anglo-American alignment in the dizzying days after September 11, when even *Le Monde* believed that "we are all Americans now."

Blair's decision to go to war was also motivated by more traditional considerations, and, to many Conservatives, he seemed more like a Canningite Tory than a Labour leader. After all, the prime minister's dislike of "rogue states" mirrored Margaret Thatcher's brisk attitude toward such countries as Libya, Serbia, and Iraq (although he would have had problems with her support for apartheid-era South Africa and Pinochet's Chile). As early as November 1997 Blair expressed concern about Iraq's WMDs and the potential for regional instability they provided. He also believed that preemptive military action had a deterrent effect. All of these views have Tory precedents.

Later, Blair was even prepared to offer Vladimir Putin a free hand in Chechnya in return for Russian support for action against the Taliban—a concept sadly vetoed by American planners still fighting the Cold War. He sought to distance himself from new Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's much-vaunted desire for Britain "to once again [*sic*] be a force for good in the world" and to place human rights "at the heart" of British foreign policy, which would have involved placing restrictions on Britain's highly lucrative arms trade. According to Coughlin, Blair regarded Cook's view as "naive and unrealistic." Yet such disagreements were disagreements only of degree.

Far from being George W. Bush's "poodle," as a million-and-one boring commentators have asserted, Blair, as *American Ally* proves, was "driven by his personal conviction that there was moral justification for taking a firm stand against those who desired to do harm in pursuit of their own political and nationalistic goals." Although Bush and most of his inner circle had independently reached the same conclusion, "Blair's own confidently-expressed opinions helped to reinforce the president's views." As Blair told the *Guardian* in 2003, "It's worse than you think. I believe in it. I am truly committed to dealing with this, irrespective of the position of America." An unnamed "key Bush aide" assured Coughlin that "Blair has been the driving force in the relationship and has played an important role in the evolution of American thinking since 9/11."

While this assessment seems overstated, it may well be that Blair influenced Bush in some ways. Britain's help was, of course, of great practical use to the White House—not just in terms of Britain's military contribution but because of resources and experiences unavailable to Washington. Blair's ability to speak directly to such men as Iran's President Khatami ("You mean you actually talk to these guys?" asked an impressed Bush in a subsequent conversation with Blair) and General Musharraf of Pakistan were also vastly helpful to an America with few friends and no imperialist experience. Blair's tireless attempts to get the United Nations to act against Iraq must surely have delayed American military action. Coughlin believes this: "Bush's agreement to go to the UN was a significant concession to Blair and demonstrated that, when it came to the crunch, the British leader did have leverage at the White House." And Blair's quiet insistence on the Palestinians' right to statehood—a legacy, perhaps, of Britain's traditionally Arabist sympathies—has indubitably had an ameliorating effect on U.S. policy in relation to both Israel and Palestine.

Blair is a surprisingly religious man, for a politician whose various administrations have been consistently anti-Christian and antitraditional in their effects, and for a husband whose (notionally Catholic) wife is notorious for her love of "healing crystals" and "faith healers." He is consistently rumored to be verging on conversion to Catholicism, yet his moral values and millenarianism appear to stem more from Low Anglicanism. His mother was a "strongly Protestant" Irishwoman, according to Blair biographer John Rentoul. Blair has claimed that he became a Christian while still at Oxford and is reputed to read the Bible every day (to which, his spin-doctors "revealed" after September 11, he has added the Koran).

There is a definite nonconformist and demotic ring about too much of Blair's speechifying. For example, addressing the U.S. Congress in 2003, he said,

> When The Star-Spangled Banner starts, Americans get to their feet, not because some state official told them to, but because whatever race, colour, class or creed they are, being American means being free.

Describing Blair's reaction after he had been told about the London bombs, Coughlin writes:

> His voice trembling with emotion, a clearly shaken Blair said it was "particularly barbaric" that the bombings had taken place "on a day when people are meeting to try to help the problems of poverty in Africa and the long-term problems of climate change and the environment.

And, in 2003, he told a colleague: "I am ready to meet my Maker and answer for those who have died or have been horribly maimed as a result of my decisions." It is all very reminiscent of Thomas Macaulay's remark that "There is nothing as ridiculous as the British middle classes in a fit of morality."

This perfervid, Low Church, evangelizing sensibility crossed the Atlantic aboard the Mayflower and has united Bush and Blair (and previous presidents and prime ministers) more than political agreements or the lingering effects of Anglo-Saxon racial similitude. Reagan and Thatcher, Bush and Blair, Lite-Republicans and New Labour—all were shaped, or are still being shaped, by the demotic legacy, for better or for worse. It is this temperamental commonality—not white racism, nor oil, nor even temporary strategic coalescence—that really defines and drives the "special relationship" 230 years on and will continue to drive it, at least until Bush follows Blair to the $50,000-a-speech after-dinner circuit. It is greatly to be desired that future American and British leaders will preserve something of this instinctive solidarity—but that, next time around, they will use it for positive ends.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

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Winners and Losers

by Clyde Wilson

Take This Job and Ship It: How Corporate Greed and Brain-Dead Politics Are Selling America Out
by Sen. Byron L. Dorgan
New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press; 277 pp., $24.95

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I thought that Sen. Byron Dorgan of North Dakota might be a cut above the general run of politicians when I noticed that he was one of four Democratic senators who voted against the Bush administration's recent "immigration reform" bill, designed to replace the American population with Third World coolie labor. That prompted me to get his book criticizing current federal-government trade and labor policies, and I was not disappointed. (The other Senate Democrats who proved better patriots than 23 Republicans, not to mention the President, were Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the last Southern Democrat in Congress, and gentlemen from Michigan and Nebraska, states where a lot of people still actually work for a living.)

Many of us have believed that the American social fabric has been stretched in recent years toward a dangerous point of tearing—that the working and middle classes in what was once the Land of Opportunity have been losing economic ground while a small percentage of the very rich got very richer. Senator Dorgan's book supplies chapter and verse in support of our suspicions. His facts and figures, listed below, are sufficient to convince all but the most hardened lobbyist and *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer.

The middle and working classes are being relentlessly pushed downward by the outsourcing of jobs to the point that the American Dream is in danger of becoming a bad joke. (Watching adult children and college students trying to get a leg up these days, as well as examining Dorgan's data, convinces me that the senator is right.) As he says, perhaps tritely but certainly truly, "this country cannot move forward while the middle class is moving backward."

The trade agreements that have been pushed through by the Establishment of both parties (with more to come) are not "free trade" at all but a snare and a delusion for all but politically favored corporations. The U.S. government is actually giving tax breaks for companies to relocate to other lands, which, of course, is also a means for the companies to escape American taxes. Further, U.S. "trade representatives" have repeatedly acquiesced in violations of those agreements by foreigners, and not a few of them have left the government to draw big bucks from those foreigners they have helped.

The major media have been concentrated into a few conglomerates that have no interest in telling us common folk the truth about what is happening, in the world or in our country.

The prices that Americans are paying for drugs, the highest on earth, have nothing to do with either free markets or product safety and a lot to do with the fact that the drug industry has two lobbyists in Washington for every member of Congress. While raising alarm at the danger of "foreign" drugs and excluding them from our market, and while getting one third of their research funds from the government, the drug companies import the products of their foreign factories and sell them at prices higher than they charge anywhere else in the world.

No government but ours puts mushy foreign-policy objectives ahead of the economic well-being of its people. President Bush could do more to advance "freedom" and "democracy" around the globe by actually enforcing our trade agreements against countries that practice slave labor than he will ever accomplish by aggressive wars.

The present regime has effects, including the break-up of communities, the downward mobility of families, and the demoralization of the people, that undermine the very conditions which make possible the productivity that supports the wealth of the regime's masters. (Anyone who has dealt with college students in recent years knows that *work* is a declining value and practice in America.)

To this critique, the senator, to his credit, adds a sizable package of legislative proposals that would begin to reverse the deleterious effects of present policies.

Ronald Reagan, despite his virtues, committed many errors—the most grievous of which was ushering into power both the Bush dynasty and the neocons. But he was an American, with a sincere interest in the well-being of the American people—which, after all, ought to be the chief motive of any president. It is hard to imagine Reagan engaging in senseless warfare or celebrating the proletarianization of the American middle and working classes as the Bushies have been doing for years now—with, of course, the collaboration of the "opposition" party.

The old Democratic Party had many faults, but it once had an honest claim to being the party of the common man. How did it become the vehicle of alienated minorities, baby killers, sodomites, limousine liberals, and Wall Street? Senator Dorgan is not as disgusted with his party as I and most Americans are, but he is not afraid to call the Democracy to account for its complicity in the selling out of the people. He tends to believe, however, that among the Democrats will be found the most potential for resistance to the present economic regime. Anyone who will take a close look at the current crop of Republican congresspersons will be tempted to agree.

Despite his vote and his thorough discussion of every other aspect of the American declension, in his book, the senator does not bring up immigration, which is surely a major element in the downward pressure on American workers. An ethnically coherent working class is better able to protect itself than a promiscuous and polyglot one. Senator Dorgan laments the present weakness of the unions. He does not mention that union leaders, to preserve their own power and perks, have abandoned the American laboring class to pander to the immigrants who are replacing us just as surely as has Wall Street. The unions have always been at a disadvantage with the banks and corporations in purchasing politicians, but they have now quit trying.

This is my notion and not the author's, but perhaps we could make progress in understanding our situation by clarifying our ideas of "free trade" and "capitalism" with an old distinction between production and trade, on the one hand, and "speculation," on the other. My rigorous free-market friends will say there is no valid distinction here. But, in fact, the works of early exponents of the goodness of free trade are full of denunciations of "speculators and stock jobbers." They drew an economic and moral distinction between the wealth created by productive labor and entrepreneurship and that produced by manipulation of paper. Certainly, the extremely wealthy in our country got that way in the second manner—by stock and currency manipulations that added nothing to the total stock of goods available to mankind. And such activities are never

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merely free enterprise but invariably require the collusion of politicians.

The middle-class America that we have known was not a great civilization, but it had a solid, homely virtue—it was a good country for the common man. Its prosperity and freedom were more abundant and widely shared than had ever been seen in history. When we have lost that, we will indeed inhabit a bleak and unlovely land.

Clyde Wilson, in retirement, spends his time scribbling for Chronicles *and other obscure journals and teaching true history for the Sons of Confederate Veterans.*

After Watergate

by Philip Jenkins

Altered States: America Since the Sixties
by Jeremy Black
London: Reaktion Books; 256 pp., $19.95

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A large portion of American history is only now being invented. For most periods of that history, we know the broad outlines: For instance, any account of the 1850's has to include certain themes, certain events and landmarks. However much we differ on our interpretation, every respectable account has to devote some space to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, to *Dred Scott*, to Bleeding Kansas.

Until very recently, though, the period since 1975 or so has not existed in the minds of American historians on anything like the same terms, and that absence demands explanation. It is not just that the events are too fresh to be recollected in tranquility. One of the best accounts of the 1920's is still Frederick Lewis Allen's classic *Only Yesterday*, written as early as 1931, while major books on the McCarthy saga or the Civil Rights Movement were appearing within a few years of those events. More importantly, these interpretations were incorporated into the mainstream story. In contrast, the years since Watergate and the end of the Vietnam War remain alien territory in many universities, while the textbooks treat this era with great diffidence, if at all. At the university where I teach, American history is divided into a series of obvious periods (*e.g.*, 1877-1917, 1917-1941), but one—constantly expanding—course covers the increasingly amorphous period "America Since 1945."

So why are we missing roughly one eighth of the history of the United States? Much of the answer is ideological, in that most academic historians froze in the political mind-set of the McGovern era. This observation applies with special force to those professors and graduate students who, though not even born at that time, remain resolutely opposed to the Nixon presidency and to the war in Southeast Asia. People clinging to that political worldview find it difficult to move on into an era to which they are utterly unsympathetic, an age of sweeping conservative victories at home and abroad, the triumph of Reaganism, the collapse of Soviet communism, and the discrediting of most of the social and sexual assumptions of the 1960's.

If we all pretend that nothing has happened since 1974, then nothing will disturb the consensus delusion. As a result, many of the studies that have appeared on the 70's and 80's focus on pop-culture trivia (leisure suits, roller disco) rather than the deeply sensitive trends in the political world (where the left got proved wrong on virtually everything). Only in the past few years has the volume and quality of historical writing on the post-1974 era (by, among others, David Farber, Steven F. Hayward, Mark Lytle, James T. Patterson, and Bruce J. Schulman) reached the point where it can no longer be ignored.

Jeremy Black's *Altered States* represents a bold attempt to map the terrain of an as-yet-unnamed historical period. He succeeds admirably and manages to be sane and even-handed even on the most controversial topics. Originally an English military historian, Black is very fair in assessing the present President Bush, offering a balanced and reasonable critique that is guaranteed to offend the millions of liberals who feel that Dubya would be the Antichrist, had he not failed the IQ test. Black, in fact, sets a high standard by which future surveys of the modern era can usefully be judged.

The arrangement of materials in *Altered States* works well—strikingly so, given the danger of such a book collapsing easily under the sheer weight of available topics. Black begins with geographical and ecological factors, a prelude reflecting that the United States is "a continent pretending to be a country." European commentators often neglect the sheer scale of the United States, as they fail to realize how many times over their own countries could be dropped into Oregon or Arizona and still have plenty of space left over for national parks. Apart from its intrinsic interest, the fact of size has many implications for social, cultural, and political matters in a society characterized throughout by mobility and internal migration. I think every page of Black's book has at least one striking observation or aperçu, especially in these opening sections: Its discussions of wildlife, ecology, and climate are all innovative and rewarding.

Having painted his landscape, Black proceeds to populate it, turning to matters of family, migration, and demography in the last advanced country on the planet to maintain replacement levels of fertility. (While I would never accuse her of being an advanced country, even Iran now has a fertility rate below that of the United States.) Here, as elsewhere, Black makes excellent use of pop-culture illustrations, drawn from novels as well as from a wide variety of films, television shows, and music. Only in the final portion of the book does he turn to political events, to parties and elections, his accounts of which benefit enormously from the foundations laid by the previous discussions of cultural and demographic realities.

While *Altered States* has so much to recommend it, Black is especially good on the historical debates that have so often represented the most ferocious combat zones in the culture wars: the struggles to define the national past and, thereby, to reshape both present and future. He devotes 11 pages to "Contesting the Past," a generous allocation in a book of just 240 pages total, but one that is fully justified by Black's coverage of the controversy over the National History Standards and the World War II Memorial, as well as the various debates over black history, women's history, and other subfields.

Books such as *Altered States* should encourage academics and teachers to venture into the wastelands of the 1980's and beyond, regions that, on contemporary maps, bear only the vague label "Here There Be Reactionaries." When they do decide to light out for these territories, they will find a range of characters, issues, and controversies as powerful as any in the nation's previous history. Perhaps, after all, there is life after Watergate.

Philip Jenkins is the author of Decade of Nightmares: The End of the 1960s and the Making of Eighties America *(New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).*

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by Aaron D. Wolf

Solemn Joy and Hot Gospel

'Twas the middle of that sacred time of year when all Americans pause to remember what is most important—Christmas Shopping Season. I had just walked through the automatic doorway of MediaPlay, out in what was then the edge of Rockford's wasteland (the East State Street shopping corridor, which has since sprawled itself all the way to the interstate and cornfields beyond).

I was there to obtain a copy of Ars Nova's recording of Josquin Desprez's *Missa de Beata Virgine*. Josquin was Martin Luther's favorite composer—the "master of notes," as he called him. Born in 1440 in Belgium, Josquin's innovations on plainsong melodies, using up to six voices to weave together beautiful chords that melt into polyphonous word-painting, conveying the sacred text perfectly, were an achievement in Western music. Without Josquin, there would have been no J.S. Bach.

Yet Bach's most famous *Ave Maria* pales in comparison with Josquin's. Adapted from Gregorian chant, Josquin's *Ave* unfolds through polyphonous imitation, layer upon layer, beginning with the highest voices, as they chant the ancient words: *"Ave Maria, gratia plena, dominus tecum, Virgo serena."* The imitation continues with the line, *"Ave, cuius Conceptio,"* but suddenly, all voices join together in four-part harmony,

solemni plena gaudio,
coelestia, terrestria,
nova replet laetitia.

"Hail, Thou whose Conception, full of solemn joy, fills the sky, the earth, with new gladness!"

Compositionally, this is the same technique used by Bach in his *St. John's Passion*, in the memorable opening chorus, *"Herr, unser Herrscher, dessen Ruhm in allen Landen herrlich ist!"* ("Lord, Our Ruler, Whose glory is magnificent in all lands!") And, just as all voices join as one to proclaim that glory in *"Herr, unser Herrscher,"* so, in Josquin's *Ave*, they converge climactically in "solemn joy."

Before I could make my way back to the section marked CLASSICAL, that category that includes everything from Gregorian chant to Renaissance motets to Mozart's *Requiem* to Schönberg's *Tortured Night*, I was knocked down by a sign hovering over an endcap featuring a brand-new release from A&M Records for this, the Year of Our Lord 1992. It was Amy Grant's *Home For Christmas*, the cover of which features the Christian-pop singer gently embracing a birch tree, her carmine lips painted to match her velvet Santa suit.

What struck me was not the alluring jacket—not *only* the alluring jacket—but the placard above, designed by MediaPlay to capture the attention of passersby: It read HOT GOSPEL.

I thought "hot" is what happens to you *apart from* the Gospel. But seriously, "Hot Gospel"—the *thermon euaggelion*? The *zeston euaggelion*? Of course, *zesty* doesn't really do it, because *hot*, in this usage, means something closer to *sexy*. Could we imagine Saint Paul, standing in the *Agora*, peddling the *pornikon euaggelion*?

The central feature of *Home For Christmas* (track 6 of 12), which still gets air time during CSS on lite-rock stations, is "Grown-up Christmas List." Written by 80's power-ballad guru David Foster (*N.B.*: He once played his "Love Theme From *St. Elmo's Fire*" at the Crystal Cathedral) and his now-ex-wife Linda Thompson (she of Elvis Presley's latter days, Bruce Jenner, and Cornfield Co.), the song is a letter from a wide-eyed adult to the bishop of Myra, in which she expresses that "I'm all grown up now, but still need help, somehow / I'm not a child, but my heart still can dream."

And what does this impressionable 30-something want from Santa? That the Gospel be preached to the ends of the earth? That the Virgin's Son be adored by all mankind?

No more lives torn apart
Then wars would never start
And time would heal the heart
And everyone would have a friend
And right would always win
And love would never end.
This is my grown-up Christmas list.

Now that is some Hot Gospel.

"Contemporary Christian Music" has been around for 30 years now, and each

of the little companies that started out peddling Hot Gospel has been bought up by large record companies (A&M, Time-Warner). The executive producers of these labels answer to the CEOs and shareholders of giant secular corporations who, of course, answer to Mammon. The effect of this on America's churches has not been insignificant. In addition to the fact that many Christians tune their radio dials to the stations that play CCM and shell out over half a billion dollars per year to purchase it, churches adorn their services with this Mammon Music, both for congregational singing and for "special numbers." The idea of David Geffen serving as liturgist for thousands of American churches is more than a little disturbing.

When Larry Norman left the hippie/Scientologist band People! in 1968 for the Jesus Movement, he tried to make the Gospel sound more appealing to those who are turned off by churchy music. On his 1972 LP *Just Visiting This Planet*, the Corpus Christi native gave Hot Gospel its anthem, "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?" He (and generations of CCM devotees following him) attributed that memorable phrase to Martin Luther. Over the years, Hot Gospel advocates have added that, in composing his hymns, Luther used bawdy-house tunes to convey the Gospel—*so why shouldn't we?* This reasoning stems, in part, from a gross misunderstanding of the nature of the German "Bar form" (A-A-B), which Luther did indeed use. As for "the Devil," the Reformer often used that word in reference to Leo X, and "all the good music," more often than not, would have meant the Masses and motets of Josquin Desprez, who knew nothing of Hot Gospel. For he belonged to a different age, one in which Christians—and their music—were still inspired by the Serene Virgin's great Conception and filled with solemn joy. ©

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by Scott P. Richert

What Lies Beneath

According to an article in the *New York Times* on September 10, "In 2005, more people from Muslim countries became legal permanent United States residents—nearly 96,000—than in any year in the previous two decades." Moreover, many of these are not simply Muslims who had been here on guest visas but now have been granted permanent status (students, for instance). Rather, as the *Times* notes, "More than 40,000 of [the 96,000] were admitted last year, the highest annual number since the terrorist attacks" of September 11, 2001.

In other words, an increasing number of Muslims are coming to the United States as legal immigrants with the stated intention of remaining here—at the very time many in the Muslim world view our country's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as attacks on Islam itself. But—the *Times* assures us, without qualification—these Muslims "come seeking the same promise that has drawn foreigners to the United States for many decades, according to a range of experts and immigrants: economic opportunity and political freedom."

The assumption behind that remark is that Muslim immigrants come to America not because they are Muslims but in spite of being so, and that their religion is either incidental or something that they are attempting to escape by immigrating. Undoubtedly, that is true for some, and for now. It is naiveté of the worst sort, however, to believe that it is true of all, or to believe that it will continue to be true.

Indeed, the article's author, Andrea Elliott, ignores her own assumption in discussing the case of "Rubab Razvi, 21, a Pakistani who arrived in Brooklyn nine months ago," who wishes to wear the *hijab* but has been cautioned against it. "She ignored the advice, even though people stare at her on the bus . . . "

Elliott notes that, in the wake of September 11,

> this period also produced something strikingly positive, in the eyes of many Muslims: they began to mobilize politically and socially. Across the country, grass-roots groups expanded to educate Muslims on civil rights, register them to vote and lobby against new federal policies such as the Patriot Act.

Even those of us who oppose the PATRIOT Act on constitutional grounds should be able to understand that some Muslims oppose it for rather different reasons. Unfortunately, these distinctions are all-too-often overwhelmed by the incessant drumbeat of President Bush's claim that "Islam is a religion of peace."

In the run-up to the midterm elections, some Republican candidates were so desperate that they were willing to try anything, even inviting the lame-duck President to campaign on their behalf. His standard stump speech, not surprisingly, focused on his own "accomplishments." (I have taken the quotations below from the remarks that President Bush delivered at a breakfast fundraiser for Rick Renzi, an Arizona Republican running for reelection to Congress.)

In attempting to pass the buck for the failure to prevent the attacks of September 11, various members of the Bush administration have pointed out that most of the hijackers were granted admittance to the United States during the Clinton administration. These new numbers, however, raise the inevitable question: How does the current administration know that the next set of terrorists didn't become permanent legal residents in 2005? President Bush hasn't been asked the question, so he hasn't had to answer it, but we can get some sense of where he stands from his stump speech:

> It's important to have members of Congress who see the world the way it is and who understand the nature of the enemy. These are evil people [presumably "the enemy," not the members of Congress] who have taken the tenets of a great religion and used it to their ends to achieve objectives. . . . These are people bound by an ideology of hate.

Let's ponder that for a moment. The President isn't saying that evil people have perverted the tenets of a great religion; rather, they "have taken the tenets of a great religion and used it to their ends to achieve objectives." The "tenets" of this "great religion" are, apparently, useful tools for such an enterprise. Shouldn't that in itself raise questions about whether it is wise to allow *any* adherents of this religion to become permanent legal residents of the United States?

"We believe," President Bush continues, that

> Jew, Muslim, Christian, atheist, agnostic are all equally American. We believe in the great right of an individual to choose how to worship as they [*sic*] see fit. The enemy says, if you don't worship the way we worship, you're guilty.

Set aside the fact that, not too long ago, conservative Republicans would have attacked any liberal Democrat who espoused this vision of religious freedom. Instead, look at what President Bush gives away here. Some Muslims ("the enemy") say that, "if you don't worship the way we worship, you're guilty." Never mind that it should be "most Muslims" and, indeed, "all good Muslims"; on the President's own limited admission, shouldn't we think long and hard before permitting members of such a religion to enter the United States? If some Muslims (most Muslims, all good Muslims) believe this abroad, does the President really believe that none will continue to believe it once they come here?

"We welcome the fact that in our country people can express themselves any way they want. If you express dissent with these ideologues, they will hold you to account." But Mr. President, isn't that precisely what Islamic pressure groups such as CAIR already do, right here in the good ol' U.S.A.? And doesn't every new permanent legal resident Muslim strength-

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en CAIR's case? After all, pressure politics is, at root, about numbers.

President Bush's stump speech continues with all of his standard justifications for "staying the course" in Iraq, but they take on new meaning in light of the immigration numbers. "We must defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here"—which is why we're importing them and giving them permanent legal status; "It's hard to plot, plan and kill when you're running, or when you're hiding in a cave"—but not hard at all, apparently, when you're living in Florida and spending your nights in strip clubs.

"Poor George," as the late Ann Richards once said of another President Bush, "he can't help it." The current President Bush, in addition to inheriting his father's "silver foot in his mouth," comes by his liberalism naturally. It's not his fault that politicians and pundits insist on calling it conservatism. Some supporters of President Bush, who understand the Islamic threat somewhat better than he seems to, continue to insist that these public statements are just for show, but let's assume, more charitably, that he's not a liar and, therefore, really believes the inanities that he utters about Islam. It's not hard to understand why. After all, Muslim scholars, both "moderate" and somewhat less so, have been arguing since at least the mid-1970's that Islam is perfectly compatible with Western-style democracy. When Aaron Wolf and I visited the Iqra School here in Rockford in February 2002 (see "Through a Glass, Darkly," *The Rockford Files*, April 2002), Dr. Khalid Siddiqui, chairman of the board of the school and assistant director of the neonatal intensive-care unit at Swedish-American Hospital, told us that *sharia* would come to the United States democratically, because, "If you look at the Constitution, it is a pure Islamic constitution." That Prohibition had once been imposed constitutionally, he argued, proved his point.

The current *imam* of the Muslim Association of Greater Rockford (*magr.org*), housed in the same former public-school building as the Iqra School, has made similar arguments. According to the *Rockford Register Star*, Shpendim Nadzaku, who came to the Rockford mosque in September 2004, was "born to Albanian parents in Ohrid, Macedonia. His parents immigrated to America when he was a year old."

In an op-ed for the *Register Star*, which was widely posted on Muslim websites, Nadzaku claimed that "the publications [*sic*] of [the Danish cartoons of Muhammad], far from being an example of Constitutionally protected free speech, actually violates fundamental principles of American law." Nadzaku's argument—that these particular cartoons are "'fighting talk' calculated solely to provoke outrage"—would not likely, even in today's politically correct environment, pass constitutional muster at the Supreme Court. What is more interesting is his claim that the Court's 1942 decision in *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire*, the source of the "fighting talk" principle, "echoes centuries of Islamic tradition." "There is ample historical evidence," he claims,

> that Islam, through the world's final Prophet, Muhammad, taught and strengthened consultative democratic traditions, respect for differing points of view, and basic personal freedoms. Freedom of religion and speech are definitely among the core Islamic values.

Yet, like the Supreme Court, Islam "holds that freedom of speech is not absolute." In exercising our freedoms, "We must enlighten ourselves with authentic knowledge [*i.e.*, Islam] to lift the yokes of ignorance and prejudice from us."

The modern liberal world, he argues, can learn valuable lessons from Islam:

> Historically, the Muslim world has offered a living example of interfaith cooperation, harmony and justice. Andalusia, for over 700 years the cradle of civilization in Europe, was where Muslims, Christians and Jews lived peacefully, side by side. It was where tolerance, consultation, and mutual respect carried the day. It was where wise people from all of these faiths engaged in scholarly interfaith discussions, research and learning. It was a legacy to the noblest aspirations of the human spirit.

Northwestern University professor Darío Fernández-Morera has demolished this potted history in an excellent article entitled "The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise" (*Intercollegiate Review*, Fall 2006). In the context of Islamic immigration to the United States, however, what's most important is the recognition that many believing Muslims such as Nadzaku see Islam as the natural fulfillment of liberalism—not post-1960's liberalism, but the entire modern project. And, in one sense, they are right. Compare these two quotations:

> Democracy claims that it is the best means of internal cohesion among a people and the best means of cooperation and peace among all peoples. It does not claim to eliminate war, but it claims that if blood must be spilled this should not be for territorial or economic gain, but for a higher moral purpose that shall benefit all mankind. Democracy also claims to produce the best quality of leadership and government.

> Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of Allah, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.

The first quotation could have come straight out of a *Weekly Standard* editorial urging war on Iraq; the second could have come from the Koran. The only problem is that I've slightly doctored both quotations. The former is from the book *Stages of Islamic Revolution* by Kalim Siddiqui, the founder of the Muslim Institute of London and the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain. I simply twice substituted *Democracy* for *Islam*. The second is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who is discussing the subjugation of man to the general will, not to Allah. But notice how easily interchangeable the quotations are—merely by substituting one word in each.

It's no wonder, then, that, as liberalism increases its death grip on America, a quintessentially liberal president should express his admiration for "true Islam" and preside over unprecedented Muslim immigration to this country. "I fully understand the nature of this enemy," President Bush told those gathered to open their checkbooks for Congressman Renzi.

No, Mr. President, you clearly do not. Unfortunately for those Americans whose protection you claim is your "highest calling," this enemy fully understands your nature, and the nature of the enfeebled liberal regime that you, as much as LBJ, FDR, Wilson, and Lincoln, have imposed upon our country. And, as Dr. Khalid Siddiqui and Sheik Shpendim Nadzaku, two "moderate" adherents of the "religion of peace," have testified, they intend to use that knowledge to the fullest. ◁

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Letter From Finland

by Edward Dutton

Finland, Democracy, and Those Cartoons

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The Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten*'s publication of the satirical cartoons depicting Muhammad prompted a crisis that touched the whole of Scandinavia. The drawings were greeted with outrage and violence from Muslims and their liberal defenders throughout the world. Danish flags were burned in Arab cities; Danish embassies were firebombed in Syria and attacked in London; and the Islamic world boycotted Danish products. Even so, the Danish government stood firmly behind the cartoonists and staunchly refused to apologize. When Norwegian newspapers republished the cartoons, there was similar government support.

Not every government in Scandinavia reacted this way, however.

The Muhammad cartoons were never published by any Finnish newspaper. Nonetheless, in February, the Finnish prime minister, Matti Vanhanen, took it upon himself to apologize to the entire Arab world. He wanted to make it clear that the Finnish government opposed the publication of the cartoons and to distance Finland from countries, such as Denmark, that were supporting free expression. At around the same time, the website of a tiny Finnish nationalist group that few Finns had even heard of—Suomen Sisu—published the cartoons. In response, Finnish President Tarja Halonen and her foreign secretary issued public statements "regretting" their publication in Finland. Before long, the National Bureau of Investigation was "looking into" Suomen Sisu's actions to see if they had broken a law forbidding them from "endangering the lives of Finns abroad." The Finnish press widely regarded this investigation as pointless and condemned Vanhanen for groveling before the Islamic world. The investigation was an attempt, basically, to intimidate perceived troublemakers into silence. Then, in March, the editor of the Finnish magazine *Kaltio* was sacked for publishing a cartoon that satirized the government's reaction to the whole crisis and which included a depiction of Muhammad. The cartoonist himself had his contract to draw pictures of the Finnish statesman J.V. Snellman withdrawn. This was particularly incongruous, as Snellman is an archadvocate of "free speech." Under public pressure, this decision, by the Oulu City Council, was later reversed.

As the Finish government's treatment of the cartoons and the cartoonists indicates, the decision by the advocacy group Reporters Without Borders to name Finland the freest country in the world for journalists is inexplicable. Finland has a long history of self-censorship, semi-dictatorship, and repression; you may exercise "free speech," so long as you do not "rock the boat."

Until 1809, Finland was a province of Sweden, and even now, she has a Swedish-speaking minority of about five percent who make up a large portion of the elite. From 1809 to 1917, she was an autonomous region within the Russian Empire; a few months after the October Revolution, she declared independence. In 1930, there was an attempt by the openly fascist Lapua Movement to take over Finland by force. They kidnapped a former president, opened fire on the meetings of other political parties, and were finally persuaded to back down by President Pehr-Evind Svinhufvud; the fascists propped up his government from then on. In the Winter War (during World War II), the Finns fought off Soviet invasion by violently suppressing any dissenting opinions. After the war, Finland essentially became a Soviet satellite state, though she was, in theory, still within the West. Under *de facto* dictator Urho Kekkonen (1956-81), criticism of the Soviet Union was basically banned, since such criticism was seen as jeopardizing the Finnish state by inciting invasion and damaging trade. Nationalist organizations and parties were outlawed. The open expression of nationalism remained illegal until the end of the Cold War. Kekkonen had the Finnish parliament in his pocket; in 1974, he decided that he did not want to stand for reelection, so he carried on as president without bothering with such a formality. Ultimately, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the Finnish economy went into total crisis.

Even now, when democracy in some form or another is seen as the ideal in the West, Finland struggles to embrace it. In 1995, when faced with a referendum on whether to join the European Union, Finns seemed uncomfortable with the idea of public differences of opinion. The tourist website Virtual Finland admitted as much:

> The most recent indication of how difficult it is for Finns to tolerate differences of opinion was the referendum on membership in the European Union held in October 1994. Many Finns even felt that the division of opinion over this issue was a threat to our independence and to the future of the nation.

The Finnish people were subjected to what one professor called "a campaign of textbook Soviet Brain Washing," and, needless to say, the government won its referendum. The leader of True Finns, Finland's small nationalist party, claims that one of the reasons for his lack of success, compared with that of similar parties in Norway and Denmark, is the "psychological legacy of Kekkonen," which is a reference to the notion that Finns are afraid to disagree or to be controversial.

Today, criticism of the European Union is not tolerated. Newspapers avoid publishing anti-E.U. articles or allowing True Finns any publicity. The Finnish people were not even given a chance to vote on whether to adopt the euro. Nobody, not even True Finns, dares say anything about Finland's appalling immigration policy or discuss immigrant crime. On the rare occasions when individual politicians have voiced such criticisms, they have been derided as "racist" until they keep quiet. Finland has far fewer immigrants than Denmark or Sweden; but, as in the rest of Scandinavia, immigrants and asylum-seekers in Finland are disproportionately responsible for crime, which has significantly increased since the 1990's, when Finland began to accept refugees from the Sudan and Somalia. Yet discussing this in the media is simply off limits. Tatu Vanhanen, the prime minister's father, is an academic

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who researches race and intelligence. He recently published a book on this subject with British academic Richard Lynn and was, like Suomen Sisu, "investigated" when he reported his findings to the Finnish press. Naturally, he was deemed a "racist," and the prime minister publicly distanced himself from his father.

Race is not the only taboo subject. There is tremendous pressure not to talk about the issue of the Swedish-speaking Finns. Despite their tiny number, they have their own schools, their own churches, their own university, their own (consultative) parliament, and their own political party, which has afforded them a tremendously disproportionate influence in almost every Helsinki government since Finland declared independence. Asserting their "rights" as a minority, they insist that everything, including movie subtitles, be displayed in both Finnish and Swedish. All Finns, whose native tongue is not at all related to other Scandinavian languages and is closer to Estonian or, more distantly, Hungarian, are forced to learn Swedish up to the university level; a certain portion of public-sector jobs are reserved for Swedish speakers; and there are areas of Finland—including towns where Swedish speakers number as little as eight percent of the population—where it is impossible to obtain work if you cannot speak Swedish. The election system is deliberately designed to gain seats for tiny minority parties, ensuring the Swedish People's Party representation in parliament.

Even unpleasant historical events that might embarrass this minority are suppressed. During the Winter War, Finland was forced to cede Karelia (one fifth of her territory) to Russia. The huge number of refugees had to be housed somewhere in Finland, but many Swedish-speaking towns on her west coast would not let them in, lest they gain a Finnish-speaking majority. Official Finnish history books often omit this episode.

The influence of Swedish speakers is so great that almost nobody dares question their status, which was overwhelmingly reaffirmed by parliament a few years ago. Out of 200 members of parliament, only 3 True Finns opposed the measure. And laws remain on the books that make it a crime to insult or mock minorities.

Perhaps the reaction in the press to the government's investigation of Suomen Sisu is a sign that the younger generation of Finns, who cannot even remember the Kekkonen dictatorship, are gradually coming out of his shadow. Until that younger generation is occupying the majority of seats in parliament, however, we cannot continue to lump Finland together with the rest of Scandanavia as a paragon of democracy.

Edward Dutton is a writer and lecturer, originally from London.

Letter From Ohio

by Greg Kaza

Sinkin' Down in Youngstown

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If you really want to know what's going on in a city, consult the motel clerk working the graveyard shift—not the clerk at the chain motel, but his counterpart at the inn that advertises the cheapest rates at the interstate exit with the truck stop. The kind of inn where you find cars patched with Bondo in the parking lot, mixed in among pickup trucks with utility boxes, plastic buckets, and waders. In Youngstown, Ohio, that would be somewhere along I-80 west of the Pennsylvania state line and east of the Warren-Ashtabula exit.

The clerk on the graveyard shift at our motel does not disappoint. "Our area's economy," he explains, "has been downsized, globalized, and sent offshore."

Waitresses at 24-hour coffee shops are also excellent sources of information. They know more about the local economy than most economists employed by think tanks. Near the interstate, we sip our coffee and listen as our waitress explains, "Youngstown has never been the same since Campbell shut down." She is referring to Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company's Campbell Works on the east side, which closed in 1977, laying off 5,000 steelworkers. Her sentiments are confirmed by state and federal employment statistics, which reveal that manufacturing jobs in greater Youngstown declined under Democrats Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and Republicans Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush. Many in Youngstown have abandoned the two major political parties as the perception has grown that both of them abandoned Youngstown's industrial economy, which once ranked third in U.S. steel production. Independent candidate H. Ross Perot won nearly one in four votes here in 1992, and voters elected maverick Democrat James Traficant to nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Traficant, a critic of trade agreements with communist China, was expelled over corruption charges after a long battle with the IRS and the U.S. Department of Justice, and is now serving an eight-year sentence in federal prison. He once famously declared it had become easier to find Elvis than "to find a good factory job here in America."

Though many in Youngstown have abandoned the two-party system, they have not forsaken their country, their faith, or their families. We see more American flags waving across Youngstown than fly over midtown Manhattan, as we spend a summer day crossing the Mahoning River, surveying the city's post-industrial landscape. Many of the flags fly from the porches of small, wood-frame homes that housed several generations of steelworkers in ethnic neighborhoods, such as Brier Hill on the west side. We ask for directions at one point, and an elderly gentleman, a retired steelworker, directs us to Interstate 670, from which we catch a glimpse, in the late-morning sun, of Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. These images are a reminder that these Eastern and Southern European immigrants believed in assimilation, citizenship, and the American melting pot.

Karin Gundish's *How I Became an American* (Cricket Books, 2001) describes Youngstown at the beginning of the 20th century through the eyes of ten-year-old Johann and his family of German immigrants trying "to make a new life as Americans." Laboring in Youngstown's steel mills was tough, including 24-hour shifts some weekends. Gundish writes, "In the

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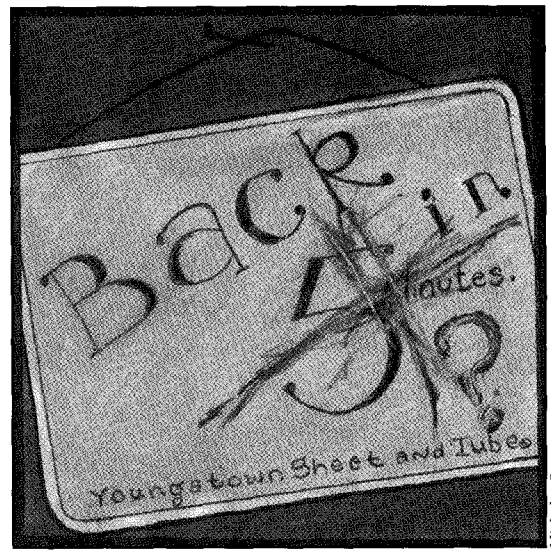
steel mills, one's life isn't out of danger for a single minute: 'All you're allowed to do is work all the time, and above all you have to stay healthy so that your eyes can keep working.'" The steelworkers put in long, hard hours to support their families without surrendering to Mammon. Indeed, the preacher in Gundish's novel asks, "[D]oesn't it harm life, if one uses one's lifetime only to make money?" That idea is not shared 405 miles to the northeast in the financial center that gave the New York Central Railroad, one of four that meet in Youngstown, its name.

The steelworkers named the blast furnaces along the Mahoning Valley after women. In front of us is the site where the oldest U.S. blast furnace, Jeannette, once stood at the Brier Hill Plant of Youngstown Sheet and Tube. Bruce Springsteen immortalized "Jenny" in his 1995 song "Youngstown," but songs and sentiments will not bring back manufacturing jobs to the Mahoning Valley. At its peak, there were nearly 100,000 such jobs in the area; today, there are barely 40,000. Flawed fiscal, regulatory, trade, and monetary policies have all contributed to manufacturing's decline in Youngstown and other once-great industrial cities across the United States. For much of the postwar era, many Democrats wrongly assumed that domestic steel companies would always remain competitive, despite the increasing burdens placed on them by government. Harry Truman went so far as to attempt to seize the nation's steel mills, until the owners of one Youngstown mill won their case against him before the U.S. Supreme Court. John F. Kennedy clashed with "Big Steel," and it is doubtful that Carter or Clinton thought that Vulcan meant anything more to the people of Birmingham, Alabama, than a race of aliens on *Star Trek*. Neither of these Southern Democrats had much to say about the steel industry during their tenures in the White House. The blind spot of many Republicans, by contrast, is their failure to understand that the long-term loss of manufacturing jobs inevitably leads to a greater role for government and a bigger welfare state. Some institution has to provide those pensions and healthcare benefits, and, if it isn't a generous employer, it will be federal legislators, who are always generous with taxpayer money when campaign season rolls around.

Back at the 24-hour coffee shop, another waitress defines the problem more clearly as she warms our brew: "Whatever the government's doing, it's not working." The clerk on the graveyard shift is more succinct. Eyeing the dirty bottom of the motel's only Java Cow and its (presumably) day-old contents, he asks, "Does the government even care?"



Nicholas Carrie

Greg Kaza is executive director of the Arkansas Policy Foundation, an economic-research organization founded in 1995 in Little Rock.

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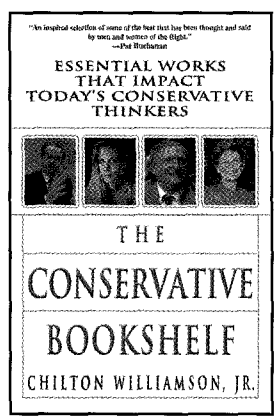

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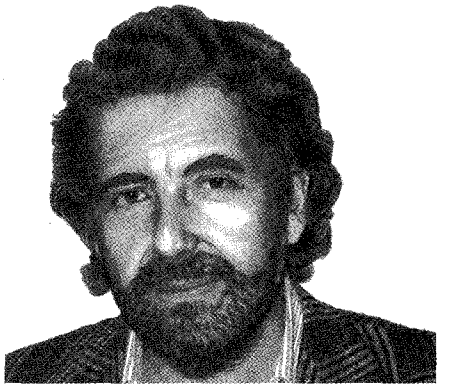
by Andrei Navrozov

Eyeless in Love



The desire to spit is widely underrated as a motive. Yet it was known throughout the university I attended, for instance, that the founder of Pan American Airways, one of its illustrious and discontented alumni, had built the PanAm skyscraper over Grand Central Station in New York with the single-minded purpose of being able to spit, from the height of his office window, on his old university club in Vanderbilt Avenue, a 20-story building and now a pitiful dwarf somewhere 30 stories below. The man who thus conspued his alma mater was South American, a foreigner bound to have been socially marginalized as an undergraduate, a greasy wop and a sore loser in the fraternity game. PanAm being the first transcontinental airline, however, it is no exaggeration that the world owes its concept of travel to the psychopathic inversion caused in an outsider by his experience of the establishment and to the vengeful pleasure with which he set out to invert its hierarchy.

My loved one's impulse stemmed from a similar feeling of isolation, a kind of anticipatory claustrophobia which is often the lot of those who are too perceptive, too precocious, and finally too clever for their own good. It has been said that in order to succeed, in society as in business, one has to be fool enough to see only the trees—not the forest of adverse consequences, necessarily attendant upon one's every action, in all their dizzying ramifications from here to the county jail. For her, the role of such an ingenue was infra dig, something like Virginia Woolf being asked to do the voice of Little Red Riding Hood in a Disney film, and the whole prospect of having to become fool enough and slave enough to end up rich enough and free enough was as sickening to her as the sense of being blackmailed.

Worse, blackmailed into some kind of freestyle confidence trick. For, like her family, society as a whole offered no guarantees, only vague, generic, schoolmarmish promises to the effect that everything will be all right as soon as one has acceded to its demands and put one's John Hancock on the dotted line. "Stuff this racket," thought the young girl, laconically and without ceremony, as a grown man might, sweeping everything into the same gutter with a single jerk of the broom. "Stuff John Hancock."

Perhaps this rational side, an aspect of character ill suited for being shut up all the youth long in the skin of a Bivona peach, was really where all her troubles began. There was more of Lolita in me at the age of 29 than there was in her at 17, and I embellish for effect only slightly. White lies, dark eyeshadow, and the rest of the powder-room arts were as alien to her deportment as Armani to Sir Winston Churchill; she had few girlfriends in whom she liked to confide and took little pleasure in the few confidences they had to share with her; while the boys were apprehensive, seeing in her peachy physique, her dislike of sports, and her ready sarcasm qualities unfit for the discotheque of American adolescence and hence unlikely to garner approval, curiosity, or envy in any other environment worth considering. Her gaze had the directness of innocence, which is the unmediated rationalism of childhood, with only a hint of slyness about the corners of the eyes, which puckered into the tiniest of wrinkles when she heard something incredibly funny or merely incredible. Flirting, for her, meant laughing out loud, and granted, by this awkward definition she was an incorrigible flirt.

That she told no fibs and kept no secrets, that she shied away from devilry and was bad at playacting, that she did not use either makeup or people, were all traits more or less certain to put her at a sexual disadvantage, which, in turn, would translate into a social disadvantage. And, shameful truth to tell, this unnerving immediacy, this transparency of motive, this total absence of mystery other than such as attends adventures of the intellect, was not what had attracted me to her. As a man—and, even more shamefully, as a member of society—I had counted the sum total of these traits as a defect of her palpable uniqueness, an inadequacy that was all the more disconcerting for being admirable. It was a drawback, like honesty in a thief. It was a burden, none the lighter for being a sack of precious stones. It was an embarrassment, like going out to dinner with a women's decathlon champion.

Worst of all, as an obstacle in the way of emotion, it appeared impassable, unyielding, genetically fixed, like an intractable juryman who insists he is not convinced beyond reasonable doubt of the accused's guilt while his gregarious fellows suspect him of just having been born grumpy. Had I been able to come out of myself for an instant just then, I might have screamed in disbelief: "What, you, naysayer *par excellence*, awful scourge and incorruptible justiciar of American culture, you, too, want to feed on crumbs from the high table? Because there you are, wanting what every other man wants in a woman, mystification and masquerade and tales of the Arabian nights, which, as you know perfectly well, is the material basis of America's progress toward a totalitarian Eden!

"Confounded fool, you got lucky and found the one woman in a million who is a fellow dissenter, an innocent creature who shares your values—for whatever reason, be it fastidiousness, alienation, pride, resentment at being swindled, or maybe because she was dropped as a baby, why should you care, because there is always some reason for people being the way they are—and you turn round and reckon this uniqueness of hers a genetic defect! Don't you understand, this young American is everything you could ever hope to find, a throwback to the era of the Civil War, to the time before any of this insanity started, to 'the civilization of 19th-century America,' which, as your idol Orwell wrote, 'was capitalist civilisation at its best.' Take a good look at any literary document of the epoch, and you will see that such phrases as *without a suspicion of a flirt* or *without a hint of the languid woman of fashion about her* were used as a matter of course in those days to characterize its great heroines. So what's your problem? I mean, what is your defense?"

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FILM

Christianity and the Movies

by George Garrett

Several things have worked against the development of serious Christian films in the United States. From its beginnings, the American film industry has included some, but very few, Christian filmmakers. By and large, it has been determinedly secular; and, because of the nature of the business, the need for a truly enormous worldwide audience to turn a profit, American filmmakers have felt it necessary to present a secular point of view, even when touching on religious subjects or themes. There are some famous Hollywood Christian epics, of course, from the earliest days, extravaganzas such as *Ben Hur, The Sign of the Cross, The Greatest Story Ever Told, etc.* These have almost nothing in common with the two films I wish to consider here. The standard Hollywood versions (no matter how elegantly produced or visually interesting) are, in a narrative sense, two-dimensional, literal-minded versions of biblical stories or ancient myth and history, in many ways fundamentally at odds with Christian storytelling and implications. They are the letter and not the spirit. They are spectacle with no real meaning beyond the surface excitement. They are also very expensive movies. At their best, they are simply secular salutes to the Christian Faith. Secular filmmakers, addressing a multicultural and essentially secular audience, tend to reflect the assumptions, including the ethics, of our society. Our secular society seems compelled to create straightforward dramatic conflicts of "good guys *versus* bad guys." We are not neutral about anything much. In the Hollywood version of reality, we first identify who the good guys and the bad guys are. Then, after some ups and downs, close shaves, the good guys usually triumph. It is the increasingly simplistic myth played out in a society where people, places, and things are labeled as good or bad and become symbols of one thing and another. This habit, ethical as it may sometimes appear to be, has serious consequences when applied to complicated subjects or ambiguous problems.

In most of the big Hollywood blockbusters of today, richly decorated with sex and violence, ethics are often irrelevant to the story line; and spiritual experience, what we might call a religious dimension, seems to be entirely absent from the world. But, to be sure, the world as presented in these hugely extravagant secular entertainments, a world without Christ, without even the shadow or memory of the Christ, calls for redemption and salvation. The world as it is depicted in most secular films makes a powerful case against itself, calls for change and conversion.

The two films I am considering, *Babette's Feast* (1987) and *The Virgin Spring* (1960), however, are in the Christian tradition of parables. The meaning of a parabolic story is inextricably part of the story, not separate from it. Not different from it. Parables do not mean something else or even something more than themselves. The point is that the meaning of the narrative (story) is wedded to the story; it is part of the story. The story and its implications are one and the same.

It is not what we call allegory. It is not something that can be translated into something else. One of the reasons that, for centuries, in the Christian tradition, teachers and preachers spoke in parables was (and remains) the belief that direct and simple statement distorts the truth by oversimplifying it and, thus, turns truth into untruth. To tell the whole truth, you have to do so in parables.

Babette's Feast does not make the simplistic case that the people in their austere and pious religious sect were "wrong" and that Babette was "right." The intention of Isak Dinesen, the author of the original story on which the film is closely based, is to present a world in which, in the words of the prophet and of the old hymn, "Bliss and righteousness shall embrace each other." Call it joy and piety. Although a certain amount of satirical fun is intended in the depiction of the little sect and its aging members, they and their beliefs are not held up for ridicule. They are needed in the world. So is Babette. So is her feast.

The film version follows Dinesen's story line with more than usual fidelity. Babette, a French Catholic refugee, is taken in as a servant to two sisters, daughters of the pastor of a Pietist sect. After unexpectedly coming in to a small fortune, Babette uses her winnings to provide an exquisite feast of French delicacies for the sisters and their guests, in commemoration of their late father. Some of the slight differences (most having to do with what you can or cannot do technically in film) are interesting. In the story, the action takes place in Norway, in a town called Berlevåg, situated on a fjord with mountains all around. She describes the place as looking "like a child's toy-town of little wooden pieces painted gray, yellow, pink and many other colors." The film, however, is set in Denmark on Jutland. The houses are whitewashed, with thatched roofs emphasizing the austerity of life there. The Norwegian setting would, in its beauty, have been distracting.

There are other differences in the motivations and depth of character. For example, Achille Papin, the great opera singer, is presented in the story as over the hill, on the way down from the peak of his operatic career. His motive is more than simply the discovery of a brilliant new talent. He is also thinking (hoping) that the discovery will help jump-start his career and keep it going for a few more years. Lorens Loewenhielm, the dashing cavalry officer, is allowed a little more background—a family myth that an ancestor married "a female mountain spirit," and that the family is gifted with second sight:

> There rose before his eyes a sudden, mighty version of a higher and purer life, with no creditors, dunning letters or parental lectures, with no secret, unpleasant pangs of conscience and with a gentle golden-haired angel to guide him.

As the General, he plays a huge part in the film's dinner scene, because he is the only one present (excluding Babette in the kitchen) who actually knows what is being served. This information is as much for the benefit of the audience as for anybody else. In the story, however, it is mostly in his thoughts. He thinks of

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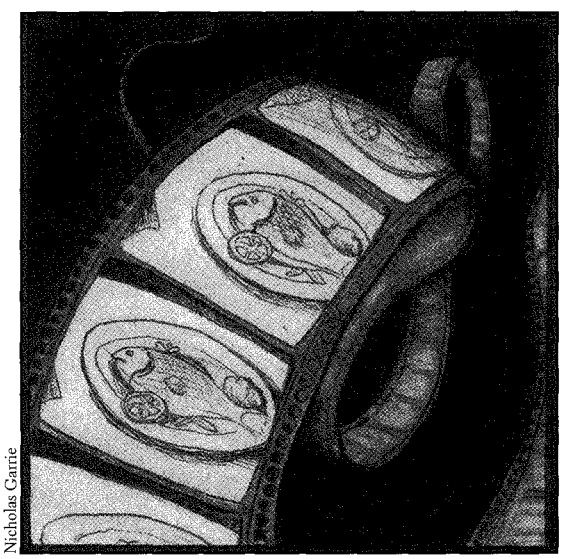
these things so that the reader can know. It is not relevant or necessary that the old people gathered at the table should know everything. They experience the feast, and it changes them. In the story, we are told that the General's brilliant and social wife was not much interested in food and that he "secretly blamed her for the indigestion from which he sometimes suffered." This is one point too many for the film to make.

What is said of him could as well be said of the others: "He was a moral person, loyal to his king, his wife, and his friends, an example to everybody." He is an ethical man in the secular world. "But there were moments when it seemed to him that the world was not a moral but a mystic concern."

Isn't that the essential theme of the whole story? It is not that morals are irrelevant, and nobody here is presented as immoral or as unethical. But the world (reality, both physical and spiritual), is much more than that. It is "a mystic concern."

There is one sharp difference between the story and the film. In the story, at the end, Babette is made more human and dimensional and complex in ways that might cloud and confuse the effect of the film. And, in the film, she is already presented as complex and moved by contradictory motives. Art is not the answer. Nor ethics. What is celebrated, instead, is the mystical union of joy and righteousness. Babette's wonderful gift, this joyous feast, is not wasted on those who cannot appreciate it. Instead, it works. It brings these people together and restores them. Nobody's motives matter any more.

One way to look at this Christian film, with its perfect balance of paradoxes, is in its presentation of the dilemma of the



Nicholas Garrie

Christian and the Creation—all of its given "gifts and creatures." In this little parable, describing the world and our condition in it, neither strict asceticism (salt codfish and ale bread) and good works nor the fabulous feast, by themselves, are enough. Taken together, as contradictory as they are, they are altogether appropriate.

Many events and parables from the New Testament are alluded to and echoed here. Consider, for example, the case of the poor widow who is singled out by Jesus (in Saint Luke's Gospel): "For all these rich men have of their abundance cast unto the offerings of God: but she in her penury hath cast in all the living she had." And, most famously, the story of Martha and Mary of Bethany so often preached from both sides of the coin—Martha, who acted as the good servant, and Mary, who anointed the feet of Jesus with an inordinately expensive ointment and then was chided for it (by Judas Iscariot, as it happens). To which complaint Jesus replied, "Let her alone. Against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor ye always have with you; but me you have not always." Babette, in that tradition, spends all that she owns in the world to prepare and serve a feast for all the others, who may not understand, yet are deeply touched and changed by her gift.

The Virgin Spring is a much darker movie, in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense, because this picture is done in classic black and white rather than in color. And a good part of the action takes place at night. In *Babette's Feast*, the color serves to soften the rigor and austerity of the setting; and that contrast expresses the tension between joy and righteousness, which is at the heart of the story. We are, in a sense, prepared for the story because we have already experienced the stark austerity of the setting and in the lives of the little religious cult. Not so in *The Virgin Spring*. A large part of it takes place in darkness or in the dim lights of dawn, of twilight, and in the scattered light of the forest. The subject is darker, too. Here, we are less concerned with the aesthetic level of experience, and we move deeper into the problems of justice and mercy.

Its celebrated and now widely known and honored director, Ingmar Bergman, is the rebellious child of a Lutheran clergyman, coming from a country that, within modern times, used to have an establishment of religion, a state church. Bergman's personal rebellion has led him to deal with profound ethical problems as they impact on the lives of Christians. *The Virgin Spring* is based on a medieval folk song, one that had been around in various versions and languages for a very long time. As described by the screenwriter, Ulla Isakson, it tells the story that serves as the narrative skeleton for the movie:

> The young virgin, Karin, who, on her way to early mass, is attacked and killed by three wild brigands, has her innocence proved by the miraculous appearance of a spring at the place where she was killed. And by the spring her father promises to build a church as penance for the vengeance he took for his daughter's death. . . . The original drama of violence and revenge is placed in a Christian context where the need for reconciliation and the certainty of God's mercy became the important parts of the song.

The film adds a good deal of complexity to that basic story line, bringing in elements of fairy tale and of pagan myths and rituals and tying it all together with a Christian theme presented from a Christian point of view—all the while maintaining the essential simplicity of folk song and fairy tale. Pared down (and oversimplified), the story is that the young, blonde, and beautiful Karin, spoiled child of Sir Tore and his wife, Lady Mareto, dresses up in her finest clothes and sets off on horseback, accompanied by her pregnant and witchy stepsister, Ingeri, to carry a gift of candles to her church. (This is well before the Reformation. It is, then, a Catholic church.) The stepsister is frightened of the forest and stops at the cottage of an old man, a hunchbacked pagan, gifted with second sight. Evidently, the persistence of the pagan myths and rituals and the survival of the pagan gods continued in deep rural Scandinavia, some aspects and practices of the old beliefs gradually becoming assimilated into the Christian world.

Riding on alone, Karin encounters three herdsmen, two men and a young boy with a small flock of goats. They are urgently thin and ragged, and one of the men is tongueless, possibly as the result of some kind of punishment. In perfect innocence, she pauses to chat with them, and, moved to compassion, she dismounts and shares her food with them. On impulse, or, anyway, without much

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premeditation, they then proceed to rape her, to rob her of her fine clothing, and to kill her. They are enraged that all she has carried in her saddle bags are some candles.

They leave her body and move on.

At nightfall, the three, unaware of the connection, arrive at the gate of Sir Tore's campground. He lets them in, also acting out of compassion. "You can sleep in my manor hall. There will be frost tonight." They join the others of the household at supper, and, afterward, he lets them have a warm place to sleep. Of the three, the boy, traumatized by what he has earlier witnessed, is ill, unable to eat.

A little later in the evening, one of the men tries to sell Karin's clothing to Lady Mareta, as some things that belonged to his sister. She immediately recognizes the clothing but gives no sign of it. She tells her husband in the privacy of their bedchamber. He quietly, carefully locks the only door to the hall. Ingeri has now returned and confirms the truth. Sir Tore cuts birch leaves and takes a ritual sauna bath. Of this act, the screenwriter says:

> The steam bath, which in the film he orders made ready before the revenge, has no ritual background, to be sure, but as a symbol of his need to be clean before taking vengeance, as before a sacrifice, it has both heathen and Christian connections.

Sir Tore, arming himself not with his sword but with a slaughtering knife, enters the hall, wakes the three, and kills them one at a time in a violent struggle. There is a moment before the killing of the boy, a moment in which he might not do it. But in his rage for revenge, he does so. As Ulla Isakson explains: "The father's fury of revenge likewise has heathen roots: he takes revenge automatically and without a moment of doubt, and he is wholeheartedly supported by his wife."

Next, they assemble the household and set out in search of Karin's body. Finding her, Sir Tore is suddenly struck by the horror of the whole story.

"Lord, have mercy on me for what I have done," he says. He staggers away, raises his arms, and speaks to God. God's answer is immediate, simple, and miraculous. When they lift Karin's body off the ground, a new spring of pure water gushes forth from the earth. The stepsister drinks from the spring.

Some of the issues raised by this film are complex when considered by contemporary Christians, ourselves living in a violent, secular, and highly legalistic society. It is a story of justice and mercy, to be sure. We need, first of all, to understand that, in a strictly legal sense, Sir Tore has committed no crime. At that time, a landowning knight and a righteous man is not above the law; he is the law. There is never any fear or apprehension of secular legal consequences as there surely would be today. His crime is more serious than that—it is a crime against God. And his recognition of this truth is much more remarkable than we, today, might realize.

Christian ideas about justice and mercy, of the New Law replacing the Old Law, are complicated and often (as in so many other things) paradoxical, logically contradictory. But essentially the sense of it, as interpreted by Christian thinkers for the better part of 2,000 years, is that justice in the world should be tempered with mercy toward those who are truly repentant. The word is *tempered*, not *replaced*. For a king or a lord or a judge to offer mercy without justice, or to be merciful in the absence of appropriate remorse and repentance on the part of the offender, is considered to be a crime in itself—the crime of tyranny. As one of Chaucer's wise men, an exemplar of wisdom and chivalry, Duke Theseus in "The Knight's Tale," says: "Fy upon a lord that will have no mercy, but is a lion in both word and deed to him who is in repentance and dread."

What we see, then, in *The Virgin Spring* is a worldly lord, in repentance and dread before his Lord, granted loving mercy in the form of that miraculous spring.

But there is a bit more to it. His promise to build a church with his own hands is more or less meaningless and irrelevant. God's love and forgiveness and grace are not to be earned or bargained for. In responding to this story, we need, also, to keep in mind the American attitude toward revenge. We seem to think of the need for revenge as a kind of old-fashioned disease, one that has been stabilized, controlled, and all but eliminated from our natures—like smallpox. We have worked to purify our secular system of criminal justice from overt elements of revenge. We are often much more concerned about the vague possibility of revenge by the victims, outside of the law's system and bureaucracy, than we are troubled by the crimes against and the suffering of the victims. We seem to be gradually losing our understanding of the profound human hunger for revenge. To most Christians of the Christian era, well into the 19th century, righteous revenge was a deep desire, part of our basic, fuller human nature. Certainly, they took the urge to right wrongs in the world much more seriously than we do: For a righteous person to control or suppress his nature was an exceptional, even a noble, act, even though it was required, a commandment. Only the saints, following the example of Jesus, were, by the grace of God, spared this terrible inner conflict.

Only in a society that is extraordinarily considerate of all kinds of human hungers, treating most of them as needs to be satisfied—or, perhaps, sublimated, as preferences without consequences—do we consider the lust for revenge to be atavistic and inapplicable to our lives.

Similarly, our era, for the first time in history, misunderstands the relationships of justice and mercy, of the New Law and the Old Law. We tend to believe the New Law has repudiated the Old Law. At the entrances of many of the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe, there are, among many other things, two figures on either side of the central doorway. The Synagogue, on the right hand, stands blindfolded with the broken staff of worldly dominion (or tyranny), in one hand, and the tables of the Mosaic Law, in the other. On the other side is the Church, a crowned figure with eyes wide open, holding the cross in one hand and a chalice in the other. The blindfold of the Synagogue is not the same thing as the familiar figure of Justice with her scales. As one leading scholar of the Middle Ages, D.W. Robertson, Jr., puts it: "Her blindfold indicates her inability to see the spiritual realities beneath the surfaces of the visible and tangible." That is, without fully considering the inner as well as the outer truth, you might as well be blind. Robertson has written the following about the distinction between the Old Law and the New:

> The whole point of the New Law, on the message of the New Testament, was felt to be that mercy is available through Christ to all those who are truly penitent. The Old Law, it was said, told men what not to do, but offered no relief from the almost impossible task of obeying all its admonitions. The New Law provided an opportunity to love God and one's fellow man in such a way that contrition might follow

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violation of the moral law. Medieval Christianity was a religion of love, not of righteousness.

The Virgin Spring, while it speaks darkly to our lives and to these times when terrible crimes are commonplace, when murder and rape and the loss of innocence are routine and scarcely more than statistics, while it speaks to us directly, is also the remarkable story of a good man—a severe and strict man, true, but also a righteous and compassionate one, who overcomes his own just nature in recognizing and repenting his ethical conduct. In the end, ethics have nothing to do with it. Nor, for that matter, does his tragic repentance and promise to God. All that matters is God's gift to him, and to all mankind, shown in the spring of water. The author tells us, appropriately, that there is a spring in a churchyard in Ostergotland which has come to be taken as the spring of this legend and where people to this day come on Midsummer Eve to drink the water for its healing powers.

Contributing editor George Garrett is a novelist, poet, and the Henry Hoyns Professor of Creative Writing Emeritus at the University of Virginia. He was named the poet laureate of Virginia in 2002.

AMERICAN EMPIRE

Tipping Points and Imperial Meltdown

by Joseph E. Fallon

Tipping points have occurred in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia that signal the beginning of a meltdown of the American Empire.

In war, a "tipping point" may be defined as an event so dramatic, often so unexpected, that it has a psychological impact on the momentum of the war itself. It adversely affects the morale of the troops, the political leadership, and the civilians of one of the belligerents. And it frequently portends ultimate defeat.

In the waging of three major wars over the last half of the 20th century, the U.S. government experienced the psychological impact of a "tipping point." In World War II, it was the Battle of Midway (June 4-7, 1942). It occurred six months after Pearl Harbor and took the Japanese by surprise, destroying a significant portion of their fleet, including four of their navy's ten aircraft carriers, the principal weapons of naval warfare. It stopped further Japanese expansion in the Pacific and shifted the war's psychological momentum in America's favor.

In the Korean War, U.N. forces had been driven to Pusan in the southeast tip of Korea and faced defeat. Gen. Douglas MacArthur's dramatic arrival at Incheon on September 15, 1950, was a tipping point. By unexpectedly landing U.N. military forces behind enemy lines, MacArthur threatened communist communication and supply lines, forcing North Korean troops to retreat. This action dramatically shifted the psychological momentum of the war in favor of the Americans—albeit temporarily. Another tipping point occurred on November 26, 1950, when Red China unexpectedly intervened with her army of "volunteers," numbering 780,000. A military stalemate was the ultimate result.

In the Vietnam War, the Tet Offensive by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong (beginning on January 30, 1968) was the tipping point. Although the U.S. military technically prevailed, the Americans "lost" the propaganda war because the Tet Offensive was so dramatic and unexpected. Since 1965, the Johnson administration had been assuring the American public that victory was in sight. Through weekly updates enumerating the body counts of enemy dead, Washington had been attempting to convince Americans that the North Vietnamese forces were being destroyed. Then, an estimated 85,000 Communist troops launched the six-month offensive throughout South Vietnam, including on her capital, Saigon. To an increasing number of Americans, Johnson lost credibility, and the war looked unwinnable. The psychological momentum, thereafter, favored the North Vietnamese.

Thirty years later, the world is a radically different place. The United States has been transformed into a global empire, through the foreign policy of the neoconservatives, many of whom are ex-Trotskyites. They lobbied Washington to pursue world hegemony, and they got it. They lobbied the U.S. government to wage war against Islam, what they called World War IV, and they got that, too. Now, we have to deal with the consequences.

The American Empire is overstretched—militarily, financially, and psychologically. In Afghanistan, the bloody riots that engulfed the capital city of Kabul on May 29, 2006, can be seen as a tipping point in that war. Previously, the city had been secure; it was the only city, in fact, that the U.S.-installed Karzai administration actually controlled. The predominantly Tajik population had opposed the Taliban (mainly ethnic Pashtuns) and was pro-American. But when a U.S.-military convoy accidentally rammed a line of 12 cars during rush hour, killing either one Afghani (according to the U.S embassy) or as many as eight (according to a local TV station), Kabul erupted in anti-American violence.

A growing number of angry Afghans quickly gathered at the site of the traffic accident to protest. Soon, a mob of 500 was hurling rocks at the Americans and chanting, "Death to America!" and "Death to Karzai!" In "self-defense," U.S. troops responded by opening fire either on or over the hostile crowd. At least seven Afghans were reported killed.

The shooting provoked a riot. Some Afghans marched on parliament, the presidential palace, the American and British embassies, and other Western missions to protest. Others ransacked local shops and international aid offices; burned U.S. flags, several cars, and a police station; and engaged the authorities in running gun battles, which lasted for hours. To curb the violence, a nighttime curfew was imposed. The damage, however, was already done. In addition to 20 Afghans killed and 100 wounded, there was the psychological impact of the riots. A significant portion of the population of Kabul was now openly anti-American.

This anti-Americanism expresses itself in the vocabulary of a pan-Afghan nationalism and a common Islamic identity, both of which are perceived by many Afghans to be threatened by the United States. And this vocabulary is uniting former enemies—the Tajiks of the Northern Alliance and the Pashtuns of the Taliban. The former are now accused of helping to arm the latter.

Why is this happening? The Northern Alliance represents Tajiks, the second-largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, constituting 27 percent of the total population. It was the principal military force on which the United States relied to overthrow the Taliban. Now, the Northern Alliance feels betrayed by the Bush administration. They believe the U.S. government encouraged Karzai to remove Northern Alliance members from important posts in the central government

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and that Washington is behind Karzai's subjection of the Tajiks to a policy of benign neglect. International aid for reconstruction and development is allocated to other regions or siphoned off through corruption. Little of the needed funds are allocated to Tajik-inhabited regions, such as the Panjshir Valley.

Together, the Tajiks and Pashtuns make up 70 percent of the population of Afghanistan. If they continue to explore any kind of anti-American alliance, the U.S. government does not have the military capabilities in country to defeat them.

In Iraq, the U.S. government has hoped that the killing of the Jordanian-born Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was a tipping point, shifting the psychological momentum to the Americans. The Bush administration is counting on a reduction in the violence of the Sunni-Shiite civil war that Zarqawi helped to foment. This civil war, though based on deep-seated religious animosities, has been inflamed by both the reality and the perception of actions undertaken by the U.S. government and the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government. Zarqawi only exploited the anger that already existed among Sunnis, which hasn't dissipated with his death.

Perhaps the alleged massacre (and subsequent cover-up) by U.S. Marines on November 19, 2005, of 15 unarmed civilians, including seven women and three children, in the city of Haditha was the real tipping point. When the results of ongoing investigations are made public, many Americans may start to view this war as having a dehumanizing effect on the troops, turning soldiers into murderers, and more will demand that they be brought home now. The psychological momentum among Americans would then shift away from maintaining a continued American presence in Iraq. If additional allegations of atrocities against civilians by U.S. troops in Iraq bear fruit, it is difficult to see how Washington will be able to retain a significant military presence in Iraq or in any other Arab state in the region.

In Somalia, the U.S. government pursued a policy that achieved the opposite of what it intended. For the last 15 years—since the collapse of the state in 1991 and the effective partition of the country and the capital, Mogadishu, among rival warlords—Somalis have lacked physical security and rudimentary social services. This deteriorating situation led to the emergence in recent years of an Islamic court system based on *sharia*, which has been embraced by the Somalis because it provides schooling and health care.

Washington, however, opposes these Islamic courts, claiming that they are sympathetic to, if not allies of, Al Qaeda. According to the Bush administration,

> The United States is concerned that in this environment al-Qa'eda may use Somalia for a base for terrorist activities around the globe. Around the world the United States will work with regional and international partners to prevent countries becoming terrorist safe havens.

Convinced that the Islamic courts had to be suppressed, the Bush administration quietly armed the warlords, who now call themselves the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism; Washington is funding their war against the Islamic courts to the tune of $100,000 per month. Despite their violations of human rights and the fact that they had killed U.S. troops in Mogadishu in 1993, the warlords became American allies in the "War on Terror."

After months of fighting, a tipping point came on June 6, 2006, when the Union of Islamic Courts defeated the U.S.-backed warlords and seized control of Mogadishu, after many troops of the warlords had switched sides. The goal of the victors is to unify the country under *sharia*. Thus, the Union of Islamic Courts is negotiating with the U.N.-backed Somalian government, which, while internationally recognized, controls little territory.

The psychological impact of this defeat for the U.S. government has reverberated throughout the Muslim world. To Muslims, Somalia reversed the trend of U.S. hegemony, and this has won new converts to Islamic "fundamentalism." And the suffering and death of Somalis at the hands of the U.S.-backed warlords swelled the ranks of potential terrorists and suicide bombers.

The continued existence of the American Empire depends on its ability to defeat any adversary, any time, anywhere. The events in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia have revealed to the world that Washington does not have that power. The imperial meltdown has begun.

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

CHRISTIANITY

When Incarnation Is Considered Idolatry

by Robert D. Hickson

In his trenchant 1919 Introduction to Scott Montcrieff's translation of *The Song of Roland*, G.K. Chesterton was especially stirred by the Old French epic poem's final stanza, after "Charlemagne the Christian emperor" had already victoriously fought on the Spanish March against encroaching Islam and seemed, at last, to have "established his empire in quiet." But then, the final poignant stanza surprises us, says Chesterton—namely, King Vivien's unexpected appeal to Charlemagne for help:

> And there appears to him the angel of God crying aloud that his arms are needed in a new and distant land and that he must take up again the endless march of his days. And the great King tears his long white beard and cries out against his restless life. The poem ends, as it were, with a vision and vista of wars against the barbarians; and the vision is true. For that war is never ended, which defends the sanity of the world against all the stark anarchies and rending negations which rage against it for ever. That war is never finished in this world, and the grass has hardly grown on the graves of our own friends who fell in it.

In 1917, one year before his courageous brother, Cecil, died in France, Chesterton published *A Short History of England*. It was written in response to "a sort of challenge," and he calls it, with characteristic modesty, merely "a popular essay in English history."

This little work contains several profound insights, not only about the "fury of the Iconoclasts"—Jews, Muslims, and Christian heretics—but about "the inner emotions of the Crusade." That is to say, the permanent intellectual and moral resistance to those who still think that "Incarnation is itself Idolatry." (The following quotations, unless otherwise noted, are all from that work.)

Let us consider what Chesterton calls

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the adventure, as well as the romance and reality, of "the Crusade; and why, for example, Richard Coeur de Lion's departure for the Crusade" was "in truth . . . more like a responsible Englishman now going to the Front" (in World War I). For, at that time—the second half of the 12th century—"Christendom was nearly one nation, and the Front was the Holy Land. . . . The Crusades were, for all thoughtful Europeans, things of the highest statesmanship and the purest public spirit."

To understand this view better, we must consider the larger religious issues involved and view them in the longer light of history:

> Some six hundred years after Christianity sprang up in the East and swept westwards, another great faith arose in almost the same eastern lands and followed it like its gigantic shadow. Like a shadow, it was at once a copy and a contrary. We call it Islam, or the creed of the Moslems; and perhaps its most explanatory description is that it was the final flaming up of the accumulated Orientalisms, perhaps of the accumulated Hebraisms, gradually rejected as the Church grew more European, or as Christianity turned into Christendom. Its highest motive was a hatred of idols, and in its view Incarnation was itself an idolatry.

Moreover, says Chesterton, with an allusion to iconoclasm,

> The two things that [Islam] persecuted were the idea of God being made flesh and of His being afterwards made wood or stone. A study of the questions smouldering in the track of the prairie fire of the Christian conversion favours the suggestion that this fanaticism against art or mythology was at once a development and a reaction from that conversion, a sort of minority report from the Hebraists. In this sense Islam was something like a Christian heresy. The early heresies had been full of mad reversals and evasions of the Incarnation, rescuing their Jesus from the reality of his body even at the expense of the sincerity of his soul.

Nicholas Garrie

Connected with the onslaught of Islam, there was an aggressive heresy coming out of the Greek Church, aided by some emperors in Constantinople (including Leo III, the Isaurian, who was also a great military commander against Islam) in the early eighth century:

> And the Greek Iconoclasts had poured into Italy, breaking the popular statues and denouncing the idolatry of the Pope, until routed, in a style sufficiently symbolic, by the sword of the father of Charlemagne. It was all these disappointed negations that took fire from the genius of Mahomet, and launched out of the burning lands a cavalry charge that nearly conquered the world.

Pointing, as well, to the later Puritan or Calvinist fury against "images," Chesterton then politely says:

> And if it be suggested that a note on such Oriental origins is rather remote from a history of England, the answer is that this book may, alas! contain many digressions; but that this is not a digression. It is quite peculiarly necessary to keep in mind that this Semite god haunted Christianity like a ghost; to remember it in every European corner, but especially in our corner. If anyone doubts the necessity, let him take a walk to all the parish churches in England within a radius of thirty miles, and ask why this stone virgin is headless or that coloured glass is gone. He will soon learn that it was lately, and in his own lanes and homesteads, that the ecstasy of the deserts returned, and his bleak northern island was filled with the fury of the Iconoclasts.

Then, Chesterton returns to the paradox of "limitations and liberties," which was so characteristic of rooted Christendom or the corporate, historical reality of Christian culture:

> It was an element in this sublime and yet sinister simplicity of Islam that it knew no boundaries. Its very home was homeless. For it was born in a sandy waste among nomads, and it went everywhere because it came from nowhere. But in the Saracens of the early Middle Ages this nomadic quality in Islam was marked by a high civilization, more scientific if less creatively artistic than that of contemporary Christendom. The Moslem monotheism was, or appeared to be, the more rationalist of the two. This rootless refinement was characteristically advanced in abstract things, of which a memory remains in the very name of algebra.

By contrast, Christian civilization was "full of local affections, which found form in that system of fences which runs like a pattern through everything mediaeval, from heraldry to the holding of land."

> There was a shape and colour in all their customs and statutes which can be seen in all their tabards and escutcheons; something at once strict and gay. This is not a departure from an interest in external things, but rather a part of it. The very welcome they would often give to a stranger from beyond the wall was a recognition of the wall. Those who think their own life all-sufficient do not see its limit as a wall, but as the end of the world. . . . The mediaeval spirit loved its part in life as a part, not a whole; its charter for it came from something else. . . . I mean that everything is blessed from beyond, by something which has in its turn been blessed from beyond again; only the blessed bless.

"We must," he says, "put ourselves in the posture of men who thought that almost every good thing comes from outside—like good news," "grace," and our "dependence on God and other good things." The answering heart of gratitude, in response

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to a gift, is vitally important to Christendom, and, says Chesterton, "I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." The Benedictine monks were courteously formed and ready to receive a stranger and a guest as if he were Christ Himself humbly asking for hospitality: "*Hospes venit, Christus venit.*"

Chesterton keenly saw another of "the inner emotions of the Crusade" deriving from this rootedness and gratitude and culture of mutual benediction:

> But the point which is the clue to the Crusades is this: that for them the beyond was not the infinite, as in a modern religion. Every beyond was a place. The mystery of locality, with all of its hold on the human heart, was as much present in the most ethereal things of Christendom as it was absent from the most practical things of Islam. England would derive a thing from France, France from Italy, Italy from Greece, Greece from Palestine, Palestine from Paradise. It was not merely that a yeoman of Kent would have his house hallowed by the priest of the parish church, which was confirmed by Canterbury, which was confirmed by Rome. Rome herself did not worship herself, as in the pagan age. Rome herself looked eastward to the mysterious cradle of her creed, to a land of which the very earth was called holy. And when she looked eastward for it she saw the face of Mahound [Muhammad]. She saw standing in the place that was her earthly heaven a devouring giant out of the deserts, to whom all places were the same.

We may at least say that the Muslim nomadic sense of "the mystery of locality" is distinctively different from "the mystery of locality" rooted in the Incarnation and Christianity's reverence, not for the merchant cities of Mecca and Medina, but for little Nazareth and Bethlehem.

Such were "the inner emotions of the Crusade." However, even in 1917, Chesterton saw that "the modern English reader" was "widely cut off from these particular feelings of his fathers" and from an understanding of "the real quarrel of Christendom and Islam."

Now, almost a century later, "that corporate Christendom" is hardly to be seen and barely vestigial, and the Faith that formed it also appears to be weak and deliquescent—inasmuch as large parts of the Catholic Church Herself are now quite absorbed with "inculturation" and ecumenism, or perhaps even historical and cultural relativism and syncretism; and where "dialogue" has often become a sentimental and deceitful cover for "dialectic," for a study of the inherent contradiction of things, as in the "revolutionary dialectic" of Marxism.

This "dialectic," manifested in the subtly subversive principle of *solve et coagula* ("dissolve and re-amalgamate"), thereby destroys the integrity of the Faith, as well as its life and rooted spiritual substance. Such a restless dialectical process inherently rejects the nature and essence of things and moves toward a monist or syncretist fusion.

In Chesterton's words, published in 1925, from *The Everlasting Man*:

> Nobody understands the nature of the Church, or the ringing note of the creed descending from antiquity, who does not realise that the whole world once very nearly died of broadmindedness and the brotherhood of all religions, . . . boiled down to one lukewarm liquid in that great pot of cosmopolitan corruption.

Today, in our "progressive globalism" and "economies without borders," such a spiritual convergence and amorphousness is returning. Is this seeming dialectical revolution to be only a temporary "increase in entropy" or a more permanent breakdown of differentiation into a new monism?

Or will we see, as has happened often before, the return of a deeper faith and true conversion of heart?

What "faith," if any, is Europe or the European Union now proposing to oppose to the current westward movement of Islam—in resistance to its spiritual and demographic permeation? Or will there be any moral or spiritual resistance at all? Moreover, will our non-Christian revolutionary dialectic now also attempt to—and be able to—dissolve Islam itself and "aggressive Islamofascism"? Or, will it, rather, dissolve into Islam, in a "more inclusive convergence"?

Robert D. Hickson was a professor of strategic and cultural studies and national security at the Joint Special Operations University, U.S. Special Operations Command.

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by George McCartney

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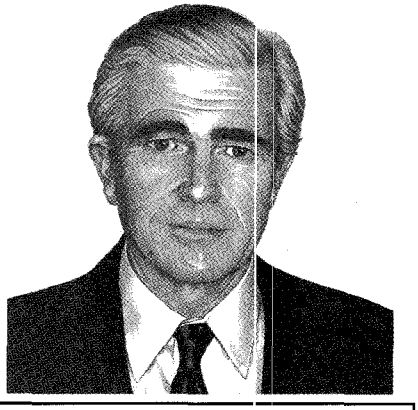

The Departed
Produced and distributed by Warner Brothers
Directed by Martin Scorsese
Screenplay by William Monahan

In *The Departed*, a raucously sordid meditation on the ways of the lower-class Boston Irish, director Martin Scorsese has included a passing tribute to Carol Reed's peerless film, *The Third Man*. Reed's adaptation of Graham Greene's novella concludes with a bitterly disillusioned woman, played by Alida Valli, walking toward the camera along a cemetery path. As she gazes resolutely into the middle distance, her would-be swain, Joseph Cotten, stands waiting for her in the foreground. When she reaches him, she doesn't stop but walks by wordlessly, refusing him so much as a glance. Crushed, he hangs his head, resigning himself to her magisterial rejection.

Scorsese's rendition of this *pas des deux* also takes place in a cemetery and is meant to represent another relationship's mournful dead end. Typical of Scorsese, however, he and his scenarist, William Monahan, have not been content with the silence that served Reed's film so eloquently. Instead, they have the young man speak his plaint to the woman. His remark is dramatically gratuitous, since both the lady and the audience know very well what's on his mind. But Scorsese doesn't trust his audience. He insists on announcing it out loud.

This small moment reveals the best and worst in Scorsese's work. His films are fully informed with the tradition that precedes them, and his mastery of his medium is unsurpassed by any other director working today. Despite his manifest gifts, however, he lacks the one that might transform him from a marvelous entertainer into the genuine cinematic artist he so clearly longs to be. In short, he lacks aesthetic tact. He doesn't know when to let up. If there is a top to be gone over, he's your man. The shooting victims in *Mean Streets* didn't bleed; they erupted in geysers of blood. In *Raging Bull*, it wasn't enough to watch punches twist and crumple boxers' faces. We had to watch them spray black blood onto the ringside fans. In *The Last Temptation of Christ*, nothing short of stripping Jesus naked for His Crucifixion would suffice. (Yes, this may have been historically accurate, but there are moments when decorum should prevail over absolute authenticity.) *Casino* gave us a blow-by-blow rendition of Mafia justice, showing us two men beaten nearly to death with baseball bats before their broken bodies were dumped, still breathing, into a grave. Scorsese apparently thinks that excess is the road to the palace of art. It is not surprising, then, that *The Departed* exhibits a similar exorbitance, but it is disappointing. The film has so much to offer otherwise.

The story line has been adapted from *Infernal Affairs*, a Hong Kong film I haven't seen but am told is a superior example of the police-and-gangster genre that the Chinese learned, in part, from Scorsese himself. Like its source, *Departed* concerns a double plot. Two young men are inducted into undercover work by their masters. From the age of ten, Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) has been groomed by South Boston's notorious mobster, Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson), so that, at the right age, he can join the police force to act as his criminal guardian's mole. Meanwhile, the other young man, Billie Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio), from the same underprivileged neighborhood as Sullivan, becomes a cop at the same time and finds himself chosen by the Special Investigations unit to become a mole in Costello's crew. In a series of sharply edited montages, we watch the two men carry out their assignments, each taking greater and greater risks to serve his demanding superiors. Every time Boston's finest think they have Costello cornered, Sullivan either warns the crime boss or thwarts the investigation. Meanwhile, Costigan keeps the head of Special Investigations informed of Costello's every move.

As they perform their undercover missions, Sullivan and Costigan are at first unaware of each other's existence. Then, through a series of cell-phone mix-ups, each becomes electronically aware of the other's shadowy presence—and the fatal hunt is on. Sullivan's corrupt Jekyll seeks Costigan's virtuous Hyde, and Costigan returns the favor. With matching physiques, square faces, and crew cuts, Damon and DiCaprio look uncannily similar, like shaven-headed Marine recruits. With each move they make, their mirroring countermissions begin to converge. This makes for a devilishly—even ridiculously—complicated plot filled with many a hairpin turnabout as each uncovers information that threatens to expose the other. They even share the same girlfriend. As you would expect, she is a police psychiatrist named Madolyn, in deference to the encompassing Catholic ethos. Madolyn/Magdalen has a taste for troubled men with hidden personalities. Despite Colin's problems with stress-induced impotence, she finds him all but irresistible. This likely has to do with his brash boast that Sigmund Freud judged the Irish to be "impervious to psychoanalysis," which, of course, they are. Billy, on the other hand, may be even more seductive. With his inner self so buried in his psychic deep freeze, there is no need to cite Vienna's quack-in-chief. One look at Billie's perpetually sweaty squint, and you instantly know he's immune to head shrinkery.

As engaging as the players are, the film suffers from Scorsese's reluctance to settle on a single vision. Using the hyperreal Hong Kong police-and-mobster fantasy as his template, he has awkwardly based his cinematic mobster Costello

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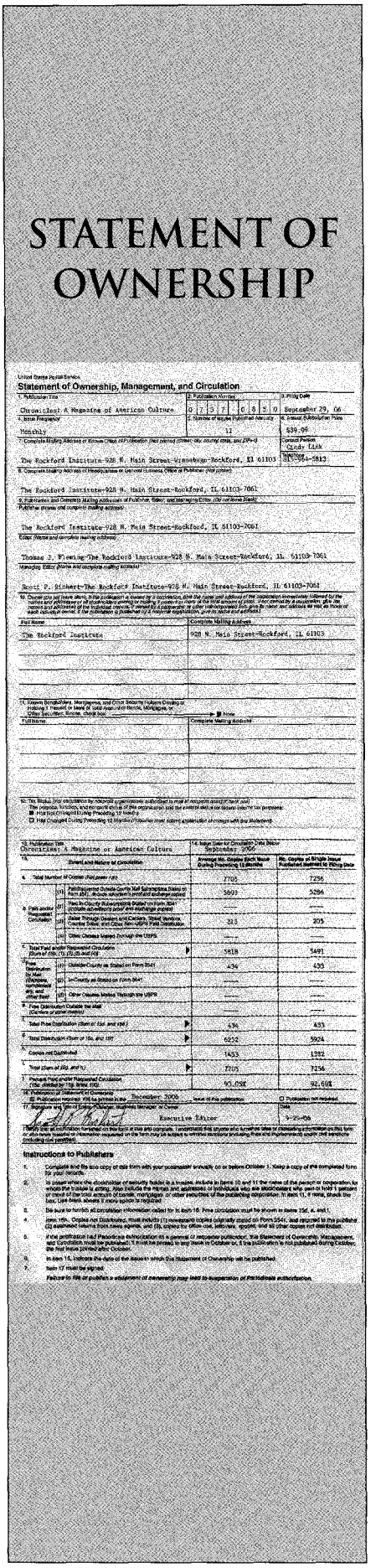
on a real criminal, the notorious Whitey Bulger, who terrorized Boston's infamous Southie neighborhood from the 1970's until 1995, when he suddenly disappeared to parts unknown with or without the help of his brother, Billie Bulger, the long-time president of the Massachusetts state senate and, astonishingly enough, short-term president of the University of Massachusetts. Whitey Bulger was and undoubtedly still is a sociopath of monstrous proportions. A confirmed killer, he exploited his South Boston neighborhood camaraderie to oversee drug running, protection rackets, and pornographic commerce, insulating himself from arrest by his political connections and his sweetheart deal with the FBI, for whom he snitched tirelessly, surrendering his own fellow criminals when necessary. He was also a switch-hitting seducer of adolescent girls and boys and kept suspicious parents at bay with a combination of threats and pay-offs. Despite their reputation for toughness, few in Boston Southie were willing to stand up to him.

Like Bulger, Nicholson's Costello has a perverse taste for young people on whom he exerts an influence that is alternately corrupting and paternal. We see him first stepping from the shadows in a neighborhood soda fountain *cum* grocery store. He is there to shake down the owner. Having accomplished this part of his mission, he leans across the lunch counter to ask the owner's 14-year-old daughter, in full view of her father, if she's had her period yet. When she stares at him nonplussed, he leans even closer and whispers something in her ear. He then turns to a frightened ten-year-old boy, advising him not to believe anything the nuns tell him in school. With this, he buys the kid a bag full of groceries. The boy is Colin, and, although he doesn't realize it, he is being recruited into Costello's gang. A few years later, Costello quotes to him James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus by way of Satan. "*Non serviam*," he drawls, and the boy improbably identifies its source. Costello beams with malevolent glee. "Smart boy," he says approvingly. Like so much else in Scorsese, this moment is a stretch. Of course, it's meant to establish that the youngster is now of the devil's party and will not serve sanctioned authority nor stand for truth. But, *come on*, would a 14-year-old in a lower-class neighborhood have read and understood *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*? And if he had, would he be the kind to go on the police force, however profitably corrupt his intentions?

As Costello, Nicholson draws upon all his previous performances of the aboriginal rebel. His satanic, leering grin, his gable-arched eyebrows, his breathy, sneering voice—all advertise his sinister force. You half expect him to sport a cloven hoof and reptilian tail. Actually, he does in a way. Calling Sullivan to a clandestine meeting in a pornographic theater, he startles his mole speechless by emerging from the darkened front seats flashing a sex toy and chortling maniacally. (Nicholson reportedly convinced Scorsese to include this scene. Elsewhere, the director exercised some uncharacteristic restraint. He refused to indulge the demonic 70-year-old's request to show him disporting himself with two naked female acolytes.)

The film is crammed with first-tier actors, successfully wielding their adoptive Boston-Irish heritage as if it were a perpetual St. Paddy's Day. There's Alec Baldwin broadening his *a*'s to beat the band. Ray Winstone menaces with his growling *r*'s. Mark Wahlberg spouts more vulgarities than you hear at Fenway Park after a Red Sox defeat. And, as the upright head of Special Investigations, Martin Sheen is given to blessing himself now and again, even when he's not in his vestibule where the walls are bedecked with family pictures arranged around a central portrait of the Sacred Heart. The performances are by turns funny and touching, vulgar and pious, and they are all undeniably deepened by Satanic Jack. Nicholson's Costello is a more dissolute, shabbier version of Harry Lime in *The Third Man*, which is what Scorsese may have been signaling by referencing the earlier film's cemetery scene. Like Harry, Costello is alternately charming and chilling, magnetic and repellent. He is, in short, evil incarnate. He's the sulfurous ballast that gives the film whatever moral weight it has.

Still, Scorsese can't leave well enough alone. He must lay on the kitsch impasto. Consider a shot taken from Colin's sleek, upscale apartment. Directly across from his window gleams Massachusetts' gold-capped state capitol. It fairly shouts of Colin's corrupt aspirations to gain wealth and power by any means necessary. Then, as the camera lingers on the gilded view, a fat, droop-bellied rat skimpers onto the window ledge and runs the entire width of the wide screen. Thanks, Marty. I might not have understood otherwise. ◁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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

American Parenthood

Overwhelmed by the shame of having a juvenile delinquent for a daughter, Héctor could almost forget that he himself was a convicted criminal and the subject of an investigation by the Immigration and Borders division of the Department of Homeland Security.

The entire business had been a father's worst nightmare, as well as a major multicultural scandal. The Southwestern media, like ravens on the city dump, had been all over the story of how the daughter of an illegal Hispanic immigrant politician had offered deliberate gratuitous insult to Islam and to Muslims the world over. Al Jazeera picked up the incident for a broadcast, so that, for weeks after, Héctor lived in terror of hearing that a *fatwa* had been issued against Contracepción. (In the event, his plan had been to flee with the family into Mexico, where he counted on the reputation enjoyed by the Federales to deter even the toughest Al Qaeda hit team.) The *Valencia County News-Bulletin* and the *Albuquerque Journal* ran front-page stories featuring Contracepción's photograph and drawing death threats from the Muslim community and proposals of marriage (among other things) from the Hispanic one. The school canceled Héctor's computer-repair contract, and the superintendent addressed a specially convened student assembly to reiterate that the Belen Consolidated School District expected its students to "deal effectively with change, value diversity, become life-long learners, and develop into responsible citizens who will have a positive effect on their community, country, and world." Most paining of all was a letter from the White House, reminding the Hon. Héctor Villa that a good Republican speaks ill neither of another Republican nor of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of a religion of love and peace, and signed "W." Excepting Jesús "Eddie" Juárez, who loathed Middle Easterners almost as much as he despised Anglos, the only quarter from which the Villas received support was their church, First Assembly of God, where Bro. Billy Joe preached a fiery sermon attacking Mohammedans and papists as Jesus bashers and invited Contracepción to stand and be acknowledged by the enthusiastic congregation.

Having been suspended from school for the remainder of the semester, Contracepción was also under sentence by the juvenile court to perform six months of community service with a faith-based outreach program run by the shiny new mosque founded in Belen the year before, a ruling that confined her to New Mexico until the following spring. What to do with their daughter after that was a matter of constant discussion for her parents. Héctor argued for sending the child to her grandparents in Namiquipa, where she could learn discipline at home and at school. But AveMaría steadfastly refused to hear of such a thing, insisting that Contracep learn responsibility by staying home and helping with the care of Dubya. Secretly, she'd determined that what the girl really needed to teach her maturity was a boyfriend. In Mexico, thirteen was regarded as being about the appropriate age; in America, it was apparently even lower. Only recently, a neighborhood friend had been boasting about her daughter, aged eight, who'd just found a new boyfriend, a kid of nine. "Oh," the proud mother had assured her, "he's hot!" In fact, AveMaría had someone in mind: Mañuel Orozco, fourteen years old, the son of an immigrant family from Ciudad Chihuahua who also attended Bro. Billy Joe's church. Maybe by summer, she thought, with Contracep on the verge of turning fourteen herself, Héctor would be agreeable to the suggestion—or perhaps the girl would have discovered romance on her own.

Besides Contracepción, the Villas were preoccupied by much else in late fall, so that time passed quickly. AveMaría, in addition to her other responsibilities, had Contracepción to chauffeur to and from the mosque, while Héctor was preoccupied with his business troubles and the bureaucratic inquiries and forms arriving almost daily from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, all of them needing to be filled out in excruciating detail. Though he'd understood early on that USCIS was simply going through the motions, the process occupied much of his valuable time, while creating in his own mind the humiliating illusion of being some kind of petty criminal, well beneath the attention of (for example) the IRS. What with one thing and another, it seemed no time at all before the *ristras* were up, the *candelarias* glowing in rows along the flat roofs of the faux-adobe houses, and the Visa and MasterCard billing statements ran three- and four-pages long.

Owing partly to Bro. Billy Joe, Héctor continued to be oppressed by worry in respect of Contracepción. The preacher had been outraged by the juvenile court's action in forcing the girl to work for a mosque, which was tantamount to slaving for Satan himself. He became obsessed with the court's sentence, and it really seemed at times to Héctor that Billy Joe considered the father morally culpable by acquiescing in the penalty—as though, he reflected indignantly, a common American citizen such as himself had any recourse in the matter. "You can't fight City Hall!" was a mantra Héctor had taken to repeating over and over to himself, in self-justification. Though sharing the preacher's distaste for the enemies of God and of the United States, he took comfort, as the weeks passed, from his daughter's increased good spirits. And Contracep had made friends at the mosque: Almost every afternoon lately, she'd found a ride home from work.

One evening after supper, when Héctor was putting the Christmas tree up in the living room, Jesús "Eddie" telephoned from the Taberna Aztlán with an invitation to join him for "a coupla drinks." Jesús "Eddie" sounded unmistakably tipsy, and Héctor had succeeded at last in positioning the tree almost exactly as he wanted it in the stand when, perceiving urgency in Jesús "Eddie's" voice as well as befuddlement, he agreed to drive to the *taberna*. There he discovered his friend seated on his favorite stool before the wide-screen TV with his back to the main entrance.

"*¿Compadrito, che pasa?*" Héctor asked,

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clapping Jesús "Eddie" on the shoulder. Though he did his best to sound jovial, the smell of stale beer and the scattering of crushed popcorn over the worn carpet depressed him. Héctor was beginning to wish he'd stayed at home to finish up with the tree.

"Not good, *amigo*—not good at all," Jesús "Eddie" replied. He sounded like a water buffalo expiring in a tar pit. "How does a friend give a friend bad news, *compañero*? I think I begin by buying you a drink, first—that you may have *tripas corazón* to hear it."

"Of what are you speaking, *hombre*? You have bad news—for me?"

Jesús "Eddie" looked tragic. "I could not give it to you at home, in the presence of your wife. AveMaría is a wonderful woman, *amigo*."

"*Sí, sí, lo sabe*—Go on, I'm waiting."

Jesús "Eddie" nodded. "OK then, as you wish. Bad news first. Drink after."

"*¿Pues?*"

"Contracepción—your daughter—has a *boy*friend!"

Héctor felt flabbergasted, then confused. The girl was thirteen, after all. But why had AveMaría said nothing to him about it?

"*Pues bien; ¿pues?*"

"The kid is a raghead, *hombre*—from the mosque!"

His drink came just then, and Héctor downed it in a swallow. The tequila hit his stomach before his brain could register the news. "How do you know this?" he demanded.

Jesús "Eddie" did not meet his eye. The truth was, he'd been stalking Contracepción, off and on, for months.

"I happened to see him driving her around in his car this afternoon," Jesús "Eddie" said at last.

Héctor was not by nature a violent man. Therefore, he did not immediately recognize rage—the towering, blinding, disintegrative rage of his ancestor and namesake—in the emotion that exploded like a firebomb within his brain. In that instant, he could have killed the anonymous young man with all the cruel, fierce, rebarbative relish of his distant ancestors, of Rudolfo Fierro, or Pancho Villa himself. Without knowing what he was doing, he seated himself, very deliberately, on a stool beside Jesús "Eddie" and ordered a second drink from the bartender. By the time it arrived, Héctor had recovered himself somewhat. Accepting a ride from a boy with a car wasn't the worst thing a healthy thirteen-year-old girl could do, he reflected—not by a long shot. He was aware of a sudden and bitter resentment against his friend. What had Jesús "Eddie" meant by exploiting his parental emotions with so trivial an alarm? He was on the point of saying as much when Jesús spoke again.

"She was settin' snuggled *against* him there on the front seat and the sumbitch had his arm round her, drivin' with one *hand* like he thought he was Elvis, or somebody." He said it with a snarl, and the hatred in his voice surprised even Héctor. "I hate the f--kin' A-rabs," Jesús added, with equal feeling. "Times, I think they're worse than the goddamn *An*-glos, even."

Before he'd finished the second drink, Héctor was in full control of himself and determined not to discuss the intimacies of family life further with Jesús "Eddie." Something, he felt, was amiss with this business. Certainly, his friend's excitement concerning Contracepción's new friend was very strange, even when you took into account the many beers he'd drunk. On the other hand, it seemed odd that Contracep, ordinarily an open and confiding girl, had said nothing of her first serious crush to her mother, and that AveMaría had thought it unnecessary to mention it to him. Héctor resolved, therefore, to adopt a casually uncommunicative attitude toward Jesús "Eddie" for the rest of the evening and take the subject of Contracepción and her Muslim boyfriend up with his wife in a serious way when he got home. He stayed for one more drink and left, after making a point of paying his share of the tab, plus a handsome tip for the barman. A light snow was falling, leaving the roads slick, and Héctor was detained briefly on Highway 47 by a wreck involving a van full of suspicious-looking Mexicans and a Cadillac carrying a party of elderly Anglos from the Belen Country Club home to their gated community north of town.

Dubya, after having been put down for the night a couple of hours before, was up again and refusing to return to bed when Héctor reached home. As he passed by her room, he could hear Contracepción chatting in a low and confidential voice on the phone behind the closed door she had recently begun taking the precaution of locking from the inside. Héctor went on to the master bedroom, undressed, and lay down in bed to watch the ten o'clock news and await his wife. Tonight, as on other occasions, he found himself wishing AveMaría were a bit more of a disciplinarian, but then, American kids never responded to disciplinary measures the way he recalled Mexican ones doing.

It was a quarter to eleven before AveMaría got Dubya down for good and came to bed herself. She was surprised to find her husband asleep with the bedside light on, the TV muted, and the remote resting in his hand on top of the blanket. Intending to undress in the dark so as not to waken him, she reached across the bed for the light-switch and saw that he was already awake and looking at her.

"*Panchito*, are you all right? Why didn't you turn the light out?"

"I'm not tired, I'm worried. María, I have something to tell you."

Concerned, she bent for a closer look at his face and recoiled from what she saw there.

"*¡Santa María!* Is someone dead?"

Héctor was resolved not to beat about the bush. "Contracepción has a boyfriend—a Muslim she met working at the mosque."

AveMaría clutched at her throat and collapsed on the bed.

"A Muslim? O Jesus Mary and Joseph!"

"So you didn't know, after all? I was thinking maybe you did."

"You suppose I wouldn't have told you if I knew? How did you find this out, anyhow?"

"Jesús 'Eddie' told me tonight. He saw her with the kid in his car this afternoon."

"But what about Manuel Orozco?" his wife wailed.

"*¡¿Quién es?!*"

"You know, from church. I've been thinking, he'd be just the boy for Contracep. She'll be fourteen next summer, it's time, and she'd be starting right at the top. It's what the girl needs to keep her out of trouble, *Panchito*."

Keep her out of trouble, Héctor thought. Good God in Heaven. And women were supposed to know all about such matters. He hadn't understood until now how assimilated AveMaría was becoming, how thoroughly Americanized. In Mexico, things tended to happen to girls of Contracepción's age. That was something else entirely than *arranging* for them to happen, as it seemed parents did in America. Was it really possible to have too much of a good thing when it came to this business of assimilation?

"We can discuss it all tomorrow," he said wearily. "Right now, I am going to sleep."

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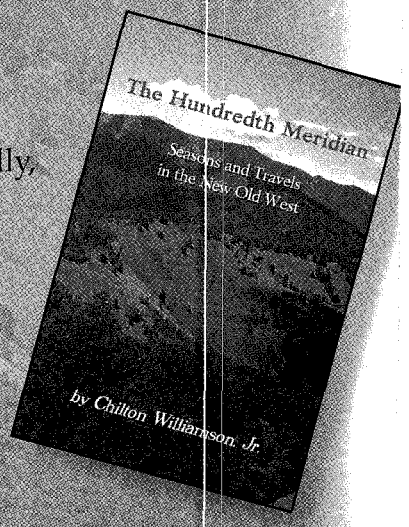
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Seasons and Travels in the New Old West



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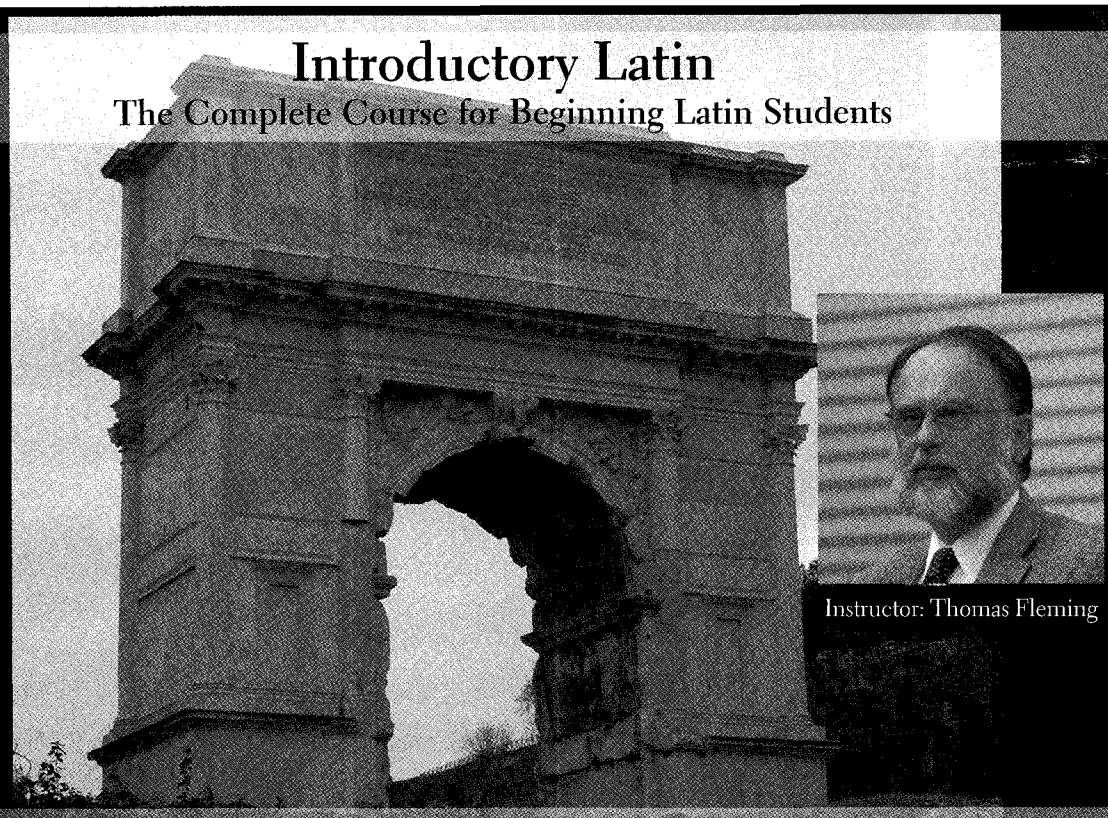

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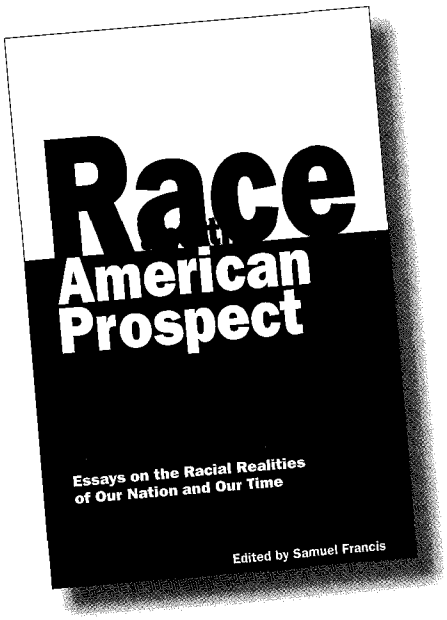

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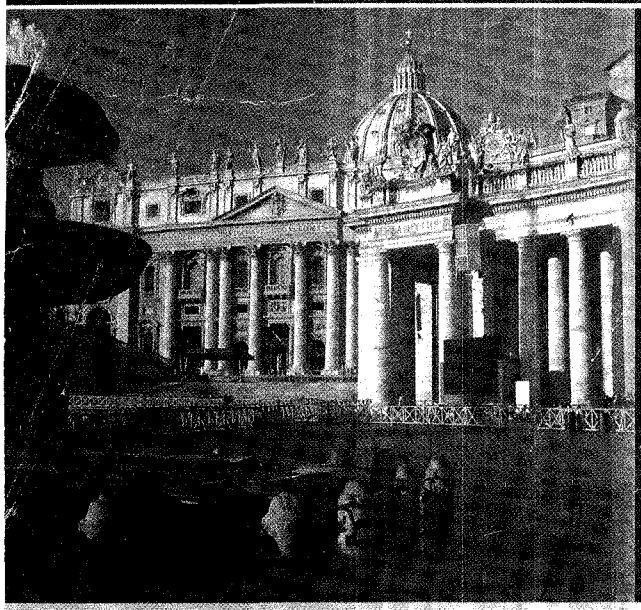

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